



Train up a Child in γ Way he should go, & when he is old &c.



Train up a Child in γ Way he should go, & when he is old &c.

K. Bible - Appendix

THE
CHILDRENS BIBLE:
OR, AN
History of the Holy Scriptures.

In which, the several Passages of the Old and New Testament are laid down in a Method never before attempted; being reduced to the tender Capacities of the little Readers, by a lively and striking Abstract, so as, under God, to make those excellent Books take such a firm Hold of their young Minds and Memories, and leave such Impressions there, both of Moral and Religious Virtue, as no Accidents of their future Lives will ever be able to blot out.

To which is added,
A NEW MANUAL of DEVOTIONS for CHILDREN.
Consisting of Prayers, suited to their Wants and Understandings; with some devout Hymns, Contemplations, and Exhortations, composed on purpose.
By a DIVINE of the Church of ENGLAND.

Adorned with Copper-Plates.

L O N D O N:

Printed for, and sold by, J. WILKIE, at the Bible, in
St Paul's Church-yard, 1759.

[Price Two Shillings.]



TO THE
YOUNG READER.

MY DEAR CHILD,

TO be happy is to be good : upon this article depends, not only our welfare here, but hereafter, in that world where we shall be eternally blest, or eternally miserable, according to the life we led, during the few years that we are permitted to breathe in this.

Now as we have so much at stake ; since a virtuous and well-spent life is a matter of so much consequence both to our souls and bodies ; it is not only the duty but the interest of every person, who has the least value for either, to search out for those rules by which we may most certainly and readily attain it. Nor has God left us destitute in this case ; so far from it, that he has condescended to be our guide himself ; and in consideration of the weakness of human nature, delivered the holy Scriptures through the mouths of his Prophets and Apostles ; at the same time testifying their truth by such miracles as he alone was capable of performing.

The Bible then we are to apply to as an infallible director, in all cases relative either to our earthly or heavenly happiness ; that is to say, religion is the
A 2. foundation

foundation of goodness; the necessary cause, without which it cannot subsist; and as in the following little volume I have endeavoured to lay open that inestimable treasure, in such a manner, as I flatter myself will be most advantageous and acceptable to you; so I hope you will read it with reverence and attention: in which case, as you will certainly grow wiser and better, so I shall think any care and trouble that I have been at, in compiling it for your use, more than sufficiently recompensed.

Nor should you regard this in the light of your other books, but keep it and think upon it, with the utmost respect and devotion, since it contains, as I have told you before, no less than the words of GOD ALMIGHTY himself, and every thing that you read in it you may be as certain of the truth of, nay, and if possible more so, than if you saw it with your own eyes; and let me recommend it to you, to pay a particular attention to the several relations, which are digested in such a method as, I trust in God, cannot fail of making them stick to your memories; but you must read them over and over again, which will not only be entertaining, but by that means you will observe what things were pleasing or displeasing to God in former times, and so be assisted to regulate your own actions and conversation for the future.

For

The DEDICATION. v

For when you hear of God's being angry with and punishing people, for their disobedience of his Holy Word, may you not immediately reason with yourself, and think with great justice, that he will punish you likewise, if you disobey him. Now he has commanded you to behave dutifully to your parents; to be submissive to your tutors; never to tell lies, nor say wicked words; and to be courteous and affable to every body that comes near you. But setting aside God's displeasure; pray, what will you get by acting contrary to these commandments; will it gain you fine cloaths, or money? or will people care for you, or love you better for it? by no means, but, on the contrary, your father and mother will not care for you; your masters will correct, or leave you to your own naughty dispositions, which will be worse; and every one will avoid and hate you.

I hope nobody, into whose hands this little book may chance to fall, will be ignorant, at that time, of the infinite condescension and mercy of God, in having given his only begotten Son, our blessed Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST to die for our sins. They will here find the life of that glorious Redeemer, with all the virtuous and wonderful actions he performed, as well as the excellent precepts he delivered; and as Christians, it is our duty as much as in us lies (in us poor and weak creatures to imitate divine perfection) to make his life the example by which to regulate our
OWN;

vi *The* DEDICATION.

own; and that you, my dear little reader, may be enabled to do this with greater ease to yourself, I have, among the subsequent pages, inserted a full and clear explanation of his inestimable doctrine (which I would advise you by all means to get by heart), with a few prayers and devout hymns that will serve you for present occasion.

Now that you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of all good things, so as to make you a blessing to your friends here, as well as an acceptable partner to Christ, in those joys which are prepared for the righteous hereafter, is the hearty prayers and wishes of

Your sincere friend,

N. H.



The

The P R E F A C E.

AS the chief care of all those who have in any way the superintendency of childrens education should be their morals; and as it is to such only that I at present address myself, I apprehend very little will be necessary to offer in recommendation of the following sheets. Indeed when we consider how easily young minds are inclined to vice or virtue, and that every word children hear, as well as every action they see almost, has an immediate effect upon their understandings, one way or other, a very little reflection must convince us, that we cannot be too cautious of what books we put in their hands; nor is it sufficient, that we do not suffer them to read any thing loose, or irreligious, we must also take care to keep from them nonsense, (which is too often published and received under the notion of being adapted to childrens capacities) whereas nothing can be farther from it, or tend more effectually to weaken and render them abortive.

But to set this matter in a yet more apposite light: may I not say, that it is with childrens thoughts as with their words, which last, if you teach them by prattling in a ridiculous tone of voice, or with a lisping accent, (like that which is too commonly affected by nurses and others about them); they frequently contract such a vicious habit of pronunciation from it, as they are sometimes whole years before they can get the better of; nay, such a one as they are sometimes never able to get the better of during their whole lives. And shall we not be cautious how we accustom their understanding to the conception of trifling and inconsistent ideas, which are so much the more likely to take root, and grow up with them? certainly we ought; besides, though childrens minds are indeed weak, they are, properly speaking, no more foolish at six than they are at thirty; in my humble opinion, therefore, were we to begin sooner

sooner than we do to talk to our boys and girls reasonably, we should find the good effects of it, in the men and women which they would afterwards become.

But I hope nobody will infer, from what I have here asserted, that I mean to enhance the merit of my own work, by depreciating the works of others; in fact, such an endeavour would be idle to the last degree; since every person is the best judge for himself in these cases, and should not the CHILDRENS BIBLE be found in all respects the most proper book extant, for the use of infant-readers, the publick would undoubtedly rather stick to what is already published for that purpose, than have recourse to any new performance. However, this much I will be bold to affirm, that it was undertaken with the design (and no other) of being serviceable, and that it is executed in a method hitherto unattempted by any one.

I have already said, that I thought the usual method of treating children was erroneous; nay, as a kind of insult offered to the dignity of human understanding; for which reason I have, in the subsequent pages, done my utmost to avoid falling into that fault, by adhering to a stile simple indeed as possible, but at the same time not absurd; to say the truth, my subject was no small help to me in this matter, the gravity of which in a great measure prevented my running into that infantine cant, if I may be allowed the expression. It also gave me frequent opportunities of making such observations as cannot fail of being useful to them in every state of life, each being enforced by such striking examples as must of necessity make an uncommon impression upon their young minds and memories. I have been particularly careful indeed to let no passage, by which it was possible to recommend virtue, or warn against vice, pass without suitable remarks.

I think I may take it for granted, that I need make no excuse for the choice of my subject, since what other could be found so true, so excellent in it's precepts, and so necessary to be known by all Christians; and let me add, that notwithstanding it's small price and size, this is as full an history of the Bible, as far as matters of faith require; nay, and even matters of fact, to the reserve of some few passages, which
I omitted

The P R E F A C E.

ix

I omitted for reasons that will immediately occur to every intelligent reader, as any folio edition whatever. In a word, though this book is principally designed for children, I trust that I have laid it down in such a manner as to make it no unentertaining or unprofitable study for grown persons, of whatever age or condition, it being my great aim, as the surest way to render it fit for one, to make it suitable to all.

Further then, this I shall leave it to speak for itself, it being my sincere wishes and desire, that it's success should be regulated by it's merit; only this permit me to say, that though for quantity and quality it surpasses, very considerably, any thing of the kind hitherto printed, I have directed the publisher to charge it at the lowest price; and in order to render it a lasting present to every little one, I have chosen rather to give it a strong and handsome binding, than to increase the bulk of the volume by crowding it with ill-executed cuts, attended with a large expence and no manner of service; which may be necessary notwithstanding to promote the sale of nonsense, but the author apprehends that the BIBLE is no fit PLAYTHING FOR CHILDREN. The encouragers of this work also may be assured, that whatever future editions it may undergo, no new additions or alterations shall be annexed to it; or if there should, on sending their formerly purchased volumes, in any tolerable condition, to Mr Wilkie's shop, in St Paul's Church-yard, they shall be intitled to receive one of those without any farther charges.



C
Bu

TH

Bu

TH

Bu

He

He

On the Excellency of the Bible.

I.

GREAT God, with wonder, and with praise
On all thy works I look ;
But still thy wisdom, pow'r, and grace,
Shine brighter in thy book.

II.

The stars that in their courses roll,
Have much instruction given :
But thy good word informs my soul
How I may climb to Heaven.

III.

The fields provide me food, and shew
The goodness of the Lord ;
But fruits of life and glory grow
In thy most holy word.

IV.

Here are my choicest treasures hid,
Here my best comfort lies :
Here my desires are satisfy'd,
And hence my hopes arise.

Lord

V.

Lord, make me understand thy law,
 Show what my faults have been ;
 And from thy gospel let me draw
 Pardon for all my sin.

VI.

Here I would learn how Christ has dy'd
 To save my soul from hell :
 Not all the books on earth beside
 Such heav'nly wonders tell.

VII.

Then let me love my Bible more,
 And take a fresh delight,
 By day to read these wonders o'er,
 And meditate by night.



T H E

Childrens Bible.

C H A P T E R I.

1. *God makes the world; 2. Man disobeys God's commands, and is turned out of Paradise; 3. Abel is killed by his wicked brother Cain; 4. God drowns all mankind in the Flood, on account of their wicked and perverse tempers, excepting Noah and his family who are preserved in the ark.*

IT is now almost six thousand years since GOD ALMIGHTY, of his great goodness, was pleased to create this world out of nothing; nor did he make use of any other power for that purpose besides his bare word; and after he had, in five days, made the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars; every fish in the sea, every bird in the air; and every beast

and creeping thing which moves upon the face of the earth, on the sixth day he resolved to make man, which he did accordingly, out of the common dust. And he said I will make him in my own image! but we are not to imagine, for that reason, that God is like a man, for he is a spirit, and has neither body, parts, nor passions. But God breathed into the man's nostrils the breath

B of

of life, thereby making him like himself, that is to say, immortal. And this was our first parent *Adam*. But God's goodness did not rest here, for fearing least his new formed creature should grow melancholy for want of a companion, and with an intent, as we may suppose, to continue his kind upon earth, he cast *Adam* afterwards into a deep sleep, and taking a rib from his side, he out of it formed a woman. By this action figuring the near and intimate relation between husband and wife. And *Adam* received her from God, and called her name *Eve*. And from these two are descended all the men and women that have since lived in the world.

GOD ALMIGHTY having

thus finished the great work of the Creation, on the seventh day from which he begun it, he rested, and this the *Jews* called the *sabbath*, which by God's command they ever after kept holy, abstaining from all work upon it. And it is in imitation of this that we keep Sunday.

But such was the infinite love of God, that he never thought he could do enough for Man. So he took *Adam* and his wife, and placed them in a beautiful garden called *Paradise*; telling them, at the same time, that he made them a present of every thing they saw, which they might freely command and make what use they pleased of, only, said he, of one particular fruit, which grows on a tree,

tree, in the middle of the garden, you shall not eat. Nay, he told them, if they tasted it they should certainly die.

2. However, this was not sufficient to prevent the woman from being tempted by the devil, in the shape of a serpent, to break God's command; and not only so, but she brought some of the fruit to her husband, who was weak enough to taste it too. Now this apple, for so it is called in the Holy Scriptures, had some particular quality belonging to it, by which means the persons who eat it, immediately became to have the knowledge of good and evil. Our first parents, therefore, were no longer innocent, but when God came into the garden to

them kept out of his sight, for shame, because they were naked. This assured GOD ALMIGHTY immediately of what they had done. And calling to them he told them of his suspicions.

The man confessed his crime, but laid the fault on the woman; and she in her turn accused the serpent. However, God was so incensed, that he turned them directly out of *Paradise*, intailing death and numberless miseries upon them and their future posterity.

Observe, now my dear little reader, how easy a command our first parents broke, which God imposed upon them, merely to try their obedience. And, such is our crime, when to satisfy any of our own

idle appetites and desires, we go against his holy will and pleasure. But our punishment will be much greater, since we shall shut ourselves out thereby, from a thousand times a more glorious *paradise* than that they lost, even from Heaven itself, when those who hear God's word and keep it, shall live and be happy to all eternity.

But to return to our first parents; having ruined themselves in the manner which is related above. In process of time they had two sons, the eldest of which, named *Cain*, was a gardener, and the youngest called *Abel* was a shepherd. Now *Cain* was of a proud stubborn spirit, so that when he came to offer part of his fruits to GOD ALMIGHTY,

he found by some token or other that they were rejected. But, on the contrary, when *Abel*, who was a good mild youth, came to sacrifice one of his flock, GOD condescended to accept it, thereby shewing a particular mark of favour to him, as he had before shewn a particular sign of dislike to his brother.

3. Now this vexed the wicked *Cain* and raised his envy: wherefore making a pretence shortly after to walk with poor *Abel* in the fields, he watched his opportunity, and when he thought nobody was near murdered him: thus, committing the most horrid of all crimes, in the most horrid degree, even upon his own brother whom instead of depriving of life

it

it was his duty to have defended with the hazard of his own.

But we are much mistaken when we do a bad action in private, if for that reason we imagine nobody sees us, for God is present every where, and it would be better for us, that it should be published to all the world, so it might be kept a secret from him. But that is impossible, and he quickly convinced *Cain* that he had not committed his crime without a witness. When driving him out of society, he fixed a frightful mark upon him, which made all people run away from, and avoid, him. Let every one, therefore, love their brothers and sisters, and if they see them more carested than themselves, be sure that it is be-

cause they are better, and not for that reason grow cross, and ill-tempered, but strive to be as good as they, unless they have a mind to draw upon themselves the same punishment which God inflicted on *Cain*.

4. Thus, my dear child, you have seen the dreadful consequences of vice in particular persons; but the world soon grew so intolerably wicked, that God ALMIGHTY could endure it no longer, and he resolved to destroy it all at once. However, as he never punishes the innocent with the guilty, there was one *Noah*, who was a pious and virtuous man, and him GOD ALMIGHTY determined to save, together with his whole family: And *Noah*, by the commands of God, made a great ship which

we know by the name of the *Ark*. And, into this ship he went with his wife, and his sons, and his daughters, taking a certain number of every living creature along with him; and he was no sooner out of danger, than God caused it to rain for forty days successively, and the sea, and the rivers, at the same time over-flowing, the whole earth was covered with water a considerable deal above the highest mountains. And all the wicked inhabitants of it were utterly destroyed.

Nor did the waters begin to abate in less than seven months, when a

strong wind blowing from Heaven the *ark* rested upon a mountain, and *Noah*, in order to try whether the earth was quite dry or not let fly a little dove, which immediately returned to him again, being able to find no place of rest. But sending the same dove out again, in a short time after she presently came back with an olive-branch in her bill; thereby, letting *Noah* understand that the Flood was gone back. So *Noah* with all his family came out of the *ark*, thanking and praising God, and all the birds and beasts came out with him.

C H A P. II.

1. *God's covenant with Noah.* 2. *The building of the tower of Babel.* 3. *The birth, marriage, and going down of Abraham into Egypt, with the evil consequences of his telling king Pharaoh a lye.* 4. *The birth of Ishmael.* 5. *The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.* 6. *The birth of Isaac.* 7. *The death of Sarah, Abraham's wife.*

1. **N**OW Noah being come out of the ark, with all his family, and the multitude of creatures which were there with him, GOD ALMIGHTY spoke to him, and assured him, that mankind should never be destroyed in the same manner again. And he told him, moreover, that he set his bow in the Heavens (that circle of beautiful colours which we frequently see before and after a shower, and call a rain-bow) which should be as a covenant between God and Man. And by

the immediate blessing of our Glorious Maker, all manner of living creatures were multiplied upon the earth, exceedingly. And Noah being a very old man at last died, leaving three sons behind him, *Shem, Ham, and Japhet.*

2. But the world no sooner was peopled again, than they began to follow their former wickedness. Tho' what they attempted to do, soon after this, was rather an instance of their great folly. All mankind lived about the same parts of the country, and they

B 4 spoke

spoke but one language; so they determined among themselves to build a city, and at the same time a tower, which should reach up to Heaven; but GOD ALMIGHTY pitying their weakness would not inflict any punishment upon them: only, coming down, he made them all speak different tongues, so that they were obliged to desist from their vain undertaking, for when one asked for a brick, the person whom he spoke to, not understanding him, brought some mortar. Upon this the people dispersed themselves into all parts of the earth, forming different nations. And from this the name of the tower was called *Babel*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *confusion*.

3. Some time after this,

there was a man named *Terah* who had three sons, *Abram*, *Nabor*, and *Haran*. And *Abram* and *Haran* took wives, and the name of *Abram's* wife was *Sarai*, and that of *Haran's* was *Milcha*. And GOD loved *Abram* because he was a good man, and he promised that he would make him the father of a great people, and that all the nations in the world should be blessed in him; that is, that our blessed Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST should be born of a woman, descended from his family, which was afterwards fulfilled accordingly.

And *Abram*, in obedience to the commands of GOD, took his wife, and *Lot* his nephew, and all his household and went down into *Egypt*, on account of a famine

med
sons,
ran.
ran
ame
arai,
was
oved
as a
nised
him
ople,
ns in
essed
our
viour
d be
de-
nily,
ful-
ence
God,
t his
ouse-
into
of a
mine

famine which raged in other parts of the country. Now *Sarai* was very handsome, and *Abram* was afraid, if he owned she was his wife, that the *Egyptians* would kill him, in order to get her into their possession. He, therefore, determined to say that she was his sister. But mark the bad effects which always attend lying. Some of the *Egyptian lords* seeing her, told *Pharaoh* the king of her great beauty, upon which he immediately ordered, that she should be taken from her brother (as he thought) and brought into his palace. However, God was displeased to see his servant's wife ravished from him in that manner, so he sent great plagues among *Pharaoh* and all his people. And the cause of

his anger at last being discovered, the king chid *Abram* severely for deceiving him, and restoring *Sarai* back again, desired that he would immediately leave his dominions.

But by this time, both *Abram* and *Lot* had increased to that degree in the number of their family and their cattle, that no country was sufficient to contain and provide for them together. Besides, their people could not agree, so they resolved to part company; and *Abram* stayed in the land of *Canaan*, while *Lot* went to settle in the plains about *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*.

4. And *Abram* was deeply afflicted because *Sarai* his wife brought him no children. And notwithstanding that GOD AL-

MIGHTY

MIGHTY promised him he should have a son, his wife could not have patience; but in the mean time desired that he would take a maid of her's called *Hagar*, who might possibly bring him issue. And this being a common custom in those early times, *Abram* complied with her request, and *Hagar* accordingly grew with child. But she no sooner perceived it, than she began to treat her mistress *Sarai* with contempt; and *Abram* telling his wife, who had complained to him of *Hagar*'s insolence, that her servant was in her hands, and she might treat her as she pleased; *Sarai* in her turn began to behave over *Hagar* with great severity. And the maid ran away from her, wandering in the

wilderness; 'till at last she sat down near a well, where an angel from Heaven calling on her, bid her be of comfort, for that she was with child of a boy, who should grow in time to be of great might and terror. And he desired she would go back to her mistress. So *Hagar* returned home again, and shortly after was brought to bed of a boy, and called his name *Ismael*.

And about this time God was pleased to appoint the mark of circumcision, and *Abram* and all his people were circumcised. And God, at the same time, ordered *Abram* to change his name into that of *Abraham*, and *Sarai* her's into that of *Sarah*. And God renewed his former promises.

5. Now

5. Now the people of *Sodom* and *Gemorrah* were the wickedest upon the face of the earth. And God sent down his *angels* to destroy them, root and branch. And they appeared to *Abraham* as he sat at his tent door, in the likeness of three young men. And after they had eat and drank, they rose up and told him what was their errand; but *Abraham*, who had his nephew *Lot* and several other relations in and about those places, most humbly besought the angels to take pity upon them, and at last they were so condescending, on *Abraham's* intreaty, to promise that if there were only ten good people among them, that the cities should not be destroyed. So the *angels*

went on their way, and about evening they came to *Lot's* house, in *Sodom*, into which they entered; but the wicked inhabitants seeing them, gathered about the door, and called to *Lot* to send the young men out to them. However, the *angels*, as they grew more violent, struck them every man with blindness. And then turning to *Lot*, they desired him to go and gather all his sons, and their wives, and their kindred together, whom the LORD would spare, on account of his regard for *Abraham*, and take them a distance off, for they were come to destroy those detestable cities.

And *Lot* did as he was commanded, but his relations laughed at him; so the next morning the *angels* took

took him, and his wife, and his two daughters, and turning them out of the town, desired them to make the best of their way to the mountains, for nothing could be done 'till they were got there; but, at the same time, gave a strict charge, that none of them should venture to look back. So *Lot* began his journey, and God rained brimstone and fire out of Heaven, and *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, with all the adjacent cities, were burnt to the ground, with all the vile inhabitants. And *Lot's* wife, presuming to look behind her, was turned into a pillar of salt.

6. And now the time of God's promise to *Abraham* being fulfilled, his wife *Sarah* became with child in her old age, and she

was brought-to-bed of a son, and they called his name *Isaac*.

But when the boy was weaned, and pretty well grown up, *Sarah* one day caught *Ismael*, the child of her maid *Hagar*, mocking and jesting at him. Upon which she immediately insisted, that both he and his mother should be turned out of doors. However, *Abraham* was unwilling to do this, for he loved his son, 'till God telling him to comply with his wife, and that he would take care of *Ismael*, *Hagar* was once again turned into the wilderness. And when the victuals, which she had brought out with her, were quite gone, she laid her son, who grew faint for want of water, upon the ground, and she sat

sat herself at some distance from him, weeping bitterly. And an *angel* at that instant opening her eyes, she spied a well of water, and he told her at the same time that God was her friend. And God blessed them both, and *Ismael*, when he came to age, married an *Egyptian* woman.

And *Isaac* was about thirty years old when God, in order to try *Abraham's* faith, called to him, and desired him to go and sacrifice his son. And *Abraham* loved *Isaac* as if he had been himself. However, in obedience to God's commands, he took him, and laying wood upon an altar he set his son *Isaac* at top of it, and drawing a knife, was just going to perform the sacrifice, when

an *angel* from Heaven desired him to hold his hand; and *Abraham*, turning about, saw a *ram* caught in a thicket by his horns. And the *angel* ordered him to make an offering of that instead of his son, whom God never designed to have hurt. However, since *Abraham* did not even withhold what was most dear to him, from the desire of the LORD, he swore that his seed should be multiplied like the stars in Heaven.

7. And *Abraham* returned home with *Isaac*; soon after which, *Sarah* his wife, being very old, died, and *Abraham* buried her in a field, which he bought of the children of *Heth*, for four hundred shekels of silver.

C H A P. III.

1. *The marriage of Isaac and Rebekah.* 2. *Abraham marries his second wife Keturah.* 3. *The Death of Abraham.* 4. *The birth of Jacob and Esau.* 5. *Esau sells his birth-right.* 6. *Isaac goes to Gerar.* 7. *Esau marries two wives.* 8. *Jacob obtains his father's blessing in the place of his elder brother.*

1. **A**BRAMHAM having thus buried his wife, began now to entertain thoughts of providing one for his son. However, resolving not to form any alliance with the people of the country in which he lived, he called a servant in whom he placed great confidence, one *Eliezer*, and first swearing him in a very solemn manner to obey his commands, he desired that a handsome retinue might be got together, and that *Eliezer* would instantly repair to his, *Abraham's*, native land,

and bring from thence a damsel to be the wife of his son *Isaac*.

And the servant went according to his master's orders, 'till he came near the city of *Nabor*, where *Abraham's* relations dwelt: and *Eliezer* kneeled down by a well, and prayed to God that as he had now got safe to his journey's end; so if it were the will of heaven to prosper his commission, he humbly prayed that the young woman designed for *Isaac's* wife, might come to that well to draw water; and that on his

his desiring the favour of a draught from her, she might not only comply with his request, but offer to give water to his camels also.

Now *Rebekah*, the daughter of *Abraham's* nephew *Bethuel*, soon after came out with her father, and every thing happened according to *Eliezer's* prayer; so he gave *Rebekah* a fine gold earring, and telling her at the same time, whom he belonged to. *Abraham's* kindred quickly invited him into the city, and *Eliezer* informing them there of the business he came upon, in a short time after *Rebekah* accompanied him back to his master, and *Isaac* and she were married.

2. After this *Abraham*

married a second wife called *Keturah*, by whom he had six sons, and giving them such a sufficient portion, when they were come to man's estate, he sent them away to settle in other countries, leaving all the rest of his immense riches to his dear *Isaac*.

3. And *Abraham* was one hundred and eighty five years old when he died, and his sons, *Isaac* and *Ismael*, buried in the same cave, in which he had before interred his beloved wife *Sarah*.

4. But notwithstanding all *Isaac's* prosperity and grandeur he was not happy, because *Rebekah* brought him no children. However, putting his trust in that God, who never forsakes the just and virtuous, he prayed with a devout

devout heart; when behold *Rebekah* suddenly conceived, and at the end of the usual time brought him forth twins; they were boys, and the name of the elder was called *Esau*, and the name of the younger *Jacob*.

5. When these children were grown up, *Esau* spent his time in hunting, but *Jacob* staid more at home, and was sober and sedate; now it happened one day that *Esau* returning from his sport, was faint thro' excessive hunger; and seeing *Jacob* with a mess of pottage before him, which he was just going to eat, he begged of his brother to give him share of it, but *Jacob* refused, unless the other would resign his birth-right to him: and

this *Esau* did, binding himself with an oath.

However we should be careful, not to consider this in the light of mortal actions: for if we do, *Jacob* was very wicked to insist upon such hard conditions from his brother, to whom he should have given some of his victuals freely; but God, who cannot err, put this into his heart, in order to bring about what he had before ordained, that *Jacob* should be the principal branch of his family: and God would at this time undoubtedly punish any one, who should be so churlish and unreasonable.

6. And there was a famine in the land again, and *Isaac* went with his family to a place called

Gerar

Gerar, where he ran into the very same error, which before had like to have occasioned so much mischief to his father *Abraham*; for fearing least the men of the country, if they knew that he was the husband of *Rebekah*, who was a very beautiful woman, would kill him in order to get possession of her, he told every body she was his sister. However, the evil consequences of this falsehood were happily prevented, by king *Abimelech*'s seeing *Isaac* one day more familiar with *Rebekah*, than such a relationship would warrant. When chiding *Isaac* very severely for attempting to impose such a deceit, he desired he would leave his dominions. But after *Isaac* was removed, *Abimelech* and his people sought his

friendship, and there was a league made between them to which both parties swore.

7. And the Holy Scripture tells us, that about this time *Esau*, to the great grief of his parents, married two *Canaanitish* women, (for in those days men were allowed as many wives as they thought proper, for the more speedy peopling of the world) and the name of one of his wives was *Judith*, and the name of the other *Bashemath*.

8. But notwithstanding the displeasure which *Isaac* conceived against him on this account, we find nevertheless that *Esau* was his favourite, because he used to bring him venison. And being very old, and quite dimighted, he called one day to his elder son, desiring

C

that

that he would go kill a deer, and dress him such savoury meat as he knew he was fond of, because he had a mind to bless him before he died. Now *Jacob* was the favourite of *Rebekah*, who over-hearing what her husband had just said to *Esau*, the instant he was gone out, killed a young kid, and preparing it according to *Isaac's* palate she gave it to her son *Jacob*, desiring that he would carry it into his father, who mistaking him for *Esau*, would give him the promised blessing.

But *Jacob* answered how shall I do this, since my brother was born with an hairy skin, my father will easily perceive the difference. So *Rebekah* made him gloves of the kid's skin,

putting the hairy side outward, when *Isaac* feeling his hands rough like *Esau's*, though he thought the voice was that of his son *Jacob*, he blessed him. Now *Jacob* was scarcely come out, when *Esau*, ignorant of what had happened, returned with the venison; but when he heard how his brother had circumvented him, and that his father also refused to retract what he had done, he wept bitterly, and in the violence of his passion swore to murder *Jacob* as soon as their father was dead. So *Jacob*, to avoid his fury, taking leave of *Isaac* and *Rebekah*, fled from home and went to live with his mother's relations.

CHAPTER IV.

1. *The vision of Jacob's ladder.* 2. *Jacob serves his uncle Laban fourteen years for his two daughters, Leah and Rachel.* 3. *Jacob has children by his wives.* 4. *Makes a new agreement with his father-in-law.* 5. *His policy to grow rich.*

1. **N**OW Jacob being on his journey was be-lated, and gathering some stones for his pillow, he lay down upon the ground to sleep, *and he dreamed, and behold there appeared to him a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven, and the angels of God, were ascending and descending thereon; and on the top of all stood GOD ALMIGHTY himself, who renewed the promises which he had before made to his family; after which Jacob wakening offered up his prayers to the Great Creator, who had been pleased to manifest*

himself to him in so extraordinary a vision, and he pursued his way.

'Till coming to a well near *Haran*, where the people used to water their flocks, he was informed that *Rachel*, the daughter of his mother's brother, *Laban*, was approaching that way, upon which he rolled a great stone from the well; and making himself known, she hastened to inform her father of his arrival, who received him with open arms. And *Jacob* agreed to serve his uncle *Laban* seven years in the quality of a herdsman, but with this proviso, that as soon

as the term was expired he should give him his daughter *Rachel* for a wife; and *Laban* promised; but when the time was come, he contrived to pass his elder daughter *Leah* upon *Jacob*, by putting her in *Rachel's* place. However, he afterwards gave *Rachel* to him also, on condition that he would serve him seven years longer.

3. Now *Jacob* did not love *Leah* so well as *Rachel*, wherefore God took compassion on her, and she bare *Jacob* six sons, *Reuben*, *Simeon*, *Levi*, *Judah*, *Issachar*, *Zebulun*, and one daughter called *Dinah*; but *Rachel* was barren: and she envied her sister's happiness in having children, so she prevailed on her husband to take a maid-servant she had, called *Bilhah*, for

said *Rachel*, perhaps I may have children by her; and this woman bore *Jacob* two sons, and *Rachel* called the first *Dan*, and the second *Naphtali*. Upon which *Leah* seeing that she had left off bearing, came to *Jacob* also, and prayed him to accept of a maid of her's called *Zilpah*, and *Jacob* complying, this woman brought him two sons more, and *Leah* called their names *Gad* and *Ashur*. And God at length hearkening to *Rachel's* prayer, she brought *Jacob* a son also, and they called his name *Joseph*.

5. *Jacob* seeing his family increased in this manner, thought it was full time to think of returning back into his native country; whereupon he went to his father *Laban*, and told him his

his design, at the same time desiring that he would give him his wives and his children, for which he had served him so long and so faithfully, and let him go. But *Laban* intreated him not to depart yet, for he saw that God blessed every thing which *Jacob* was concerned in, and had blessed himself for *Jacob's* sake. And he told him, moreover, that if he would still remain in the station he was, it should be on his own terms, for he would give him whatever wages he demanded; this was a fair proposal; and *Jacob* answered, that if he would consent to give him all the beasts which were at that time among his cattle either speckled or ring-streaked, and all that might, from that time 'till he left him,

be brought forth so, he would stay. And *Laban* accepted his service upon this condition. So *Jacob* removed his portion of the flocks three days journey distant from his father-in law's, and putting them under the care of proper officers, he stayed to take care of *Laban's* himself.

And *Jacob* thought of the following device to increase the number of cattle which should fall to his share. He took some thin twigs of different trees, and peeling the outside rinds off from them in streaks, so that the white might here and there appear, he stuck them up in the gutters, and near the watering places where he knew the beasts used to come together, and the females having seen the twigs

constantly before their eyes during the time of conception, brought forth their young almost all of two colours. However, I hope I need not observe to my young readers, that this action of *Jacob's*, also, must be looked upon as the effect of Divine Inspiration.

And as no such excuse can be made now, a fraud of this kind would be highly blameable; for we are not to take sinister measures to profit ourselves upon any account, even in our dealings with intire strangers, much less in those with our nearest friends and relations.

CHAPTER V.

1. *Jacob quits his father-in-law's service.* 2. *Is pursued by Laban.*
3. *Wrestles with an angel.* 4. *Meets his brother Esau.* 5. *Dinah is ravished.* 6. *The Shechemites slain.*

1. **N**OW *Laban* began to dislike his son-in-law's success, and thinking to evade an engagement by which he found himself in the way to be so considerable a loser, he changed *Jacob's* wages no less than ten times, but the hand of God as often turned it to *Jacob's* advantage.

And *Jacob* on the other hand began to be displeased at his father in-law's treatment; he thought these proceedings were but an ill return for the long services he had done him. Besides, he did not know how far *Laban's* resentment might carry him at last, perhaps to the destruction of himself and family. Wherefore,

fore, sending one day for *Leah* and *Rachel* to come out to him in the field, where he was watching and feeding the cattle, he told them his fears; he told them he plainly perceived *Laban* and his sons, had for some time looked upon him with jealous eyes, and that it was high time to think of providing for their mutual safety.

His wives, as their duty directed them, made answer that they were all obedience to whatever he proposed, and in the end it was determined among themselves, to move off with their servants and cattle, without giving *Laban* any previous notice of their design; and this *Jacob* accordingly executed in the night, getting a considerable way from the place

before any body knew of his departure,

2 But the news was no sooner brought to his father-in-law, than in a great passion, getting a number of his people together, he prepared to follow him; and he was now almost come up to the spot on which *Jacob* had pitched his tents, when God appearing to *Laban* in a dream, bid him to beware of what he was about, for if he offered to hurt a hair of *Jacob's* head, he would severely punish him. And *Laban* waking, went with his retinue towards *Jacob*, but paying a just regard to the warning he had received, he only chid him for leaving his country in that clandestine manner; and searching for some images of his, which he imagined

were stolen by some of *Jacob's* family, he returned, first setting up a land-mark, beyond which neither party should presume to pass, in order to do a mischief to the other.

3. After this *Jacob* pursued his rout, when tidings were brought him, that his brother *Esau*, at the head of four hundred men, was coming upon the march to meet him. This terrified *Jacob* exceedingly, notwithstanding which he determined not to retreat, but imploring the Divine protection, he picked out some of the best of his cattle, in number about six hundred, and ordering them to be driven before, in different flocks, as a present to his brother, he then dispatched his wives and children, following in the rear all alone.

And being come to the side of a brook, the Holy Scriptures inform us, that *Jacob* was wrestled with by an *angel*, from the setting of the sun, to the breaking of the day; and still resisting with great strength, the *angel* at last touched him on the hollow of the thigh, which occasioned *Jacob* to halt ever after. And it was upon this account, that the *Jews* never eat of the finew that shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh.

4. But, we are further told, that this *angel* at the same time changed *Jacob's* name into that of *Israel*, who, procuring his blessing, went forward to meet his brother. And *Esau* having by this met the people with the present, began to be softened, and at last totally

totally forgetting his anger, when *Jacob* presented himself, he immediately fell upon his neck and kissed him, and wept. *Jacob* then brought his wives, and his sons, and his daughter, who all bowed themselves before *Esau*, and many tokens of kindness and civility being paid and received on both sides, they parted; an excellent lesson to teach such near relations how to behave towards one another with condescension and affection; and not by pride and bitterness, to inflame any little heats that may possibly rise betwixt them. Let every brother then be *Jacob* in his submission to his brother, and *Esu* in his readiness to forgive

5. *Jacob* having thus by his prudent behaviour

turned his brother's resentment into friendship, purchased a field in a place called *Succoth*, in which he erected an altar, and pitched his tents. But he had not been long seated there, before a misfortune happened to his family, in the person of his daughter *Dinah*, who was ravished by *Shechem* son of *Hamor* the prince of the country, while she was upon a visit to some of the female inhabitants: but *Dinah* being extremely beautiful, the young prince was willing to marry her; and his father *Hamor*, at *Shechem's* desire, began to treat with *Jacob* about the match.

6. Nor was *Jacob* deaf to *Hamor's* proposal, but consulting with his household, it was agreed, that the marriage should take place

place, on condition that the king, and all his male subjects, would consent to be circumcised; and to this they readily submitted. When on the third day, at the time that their wounds were the most uneasy, *Simeon* and *Levi*, two of *Jacob's* sons, entered among them armed, and without sparing either age or rank, slew all those unfortunate people, unable, from their circumstances, to make any resistance; and afterwards plundering the city, they brought all the wives and daughters of

the inhabitants into captivity. But this bloody and cruel enterprize was solely affecting to the pious *Jacob*, who by no means applauded the barbarity of his sons; but, on the contrary, reproved them severely for committing an action which even the outrage offered to their sister could by no means excuse. However it had this good effect, that it struck such a terror into the neighbouring nations, that none of them dare rise to revenge upon *Jacob* the inhumanity of his sons.

CHAPTER VI.

1. *Jacob* by God's command removes to *Beth-el*. 2. *Rachel* dies in child-birth of *Benjamin*. 3. The death of *Isaac*. 4. *Joseph* is hated by his brothers. 5. They attempt to murder him. 6. *Joseph* is sold for a slave. 7. The art of the brothers to disguise the truth from their father.

1. **T**HINGS being thus settled, God commanded *Jacob* to remove his habitation to *Beth-el*,

Beth-el, and build an altar there, in remembrance of his having appeared to him in that place, at the time when he fled from his brother *Esau*: and *Jacob* ordered all the people belonging to him, who had *idols* to fling them away, and have recourse to the true worship; and God blessed him, and renewed his promises.

2. But about this time *Jacob* suffered a very grievous affliction, his beloved wife *Rachel* dying in child-bed of her second son, whom with her last breath she named *Benjamin*; and after having buried her, *Jacob* pursued his journey 'till he arrived at his father's dwelling-place, whom he had once more the honour and happiness of embracing before death.

3. For *Isaac* was a very old man, upwards of a hundred and four-score years of age, when his son *Jacob* returned to see him. And *Isaac*, blessing *Jacob*, died, and was honourably interred by his two sons, who after his death parted their families, *Esau* withdrawing to *Mount Seir*, while *Jacob* remained in the peaceable possession of the land of *Canaan*.

And here, my dear little reader, begins a history as delightful and instructing, almost, as any in the whole sacred Scriptures. I mean that passage in the Old Testament which generally goes under the title of *Joseph* and his brethren. And as I trust in God you will not fail to make the proper use of so excellent an example, I shall

I shall here set down all the remarkable circumstances of that Patriarch's entertaining life and fortune; tho' I must inform you, that it is impossible but the story should lose both in it's weight and beauty, by departing in a single word from the language of Holy Writ.

4. You have already been informed, that *Joseph* was the son of *Jacob*, by his wife *Rachel*, born to them before they left their father *Laban's* service; and the Scriptures tell us that he was a lad of about seventeen years old, when his brothers began to conceive a hatred against him, on account of the remarkable fondness which their father shewed for him, above any of the rest of his children. *Joseph*, for instance, was

distinguished by finer cloaths than any of his brothers; and though this is the natural consequence of being a good child, since parents will always love such, and give them every thing that can possibly conduce to their pleasure or happiness; yet was *Joseph* very much to blame, with respect to his brothers, for we are farther informed by the Holy Bible, that he used frequently to bring tales to his father of what they did abroad, and this, as it made them grow stronger in their dislike, so was it a very unfriendly and ungenerous thing; for tho' we are not obliged to agree with our brothers in any little folly, and it is our duty to dissuade them from it as much as we can; yet we

we are by no means to be a spy upon their actions, or reveal such to their prejudice, either to our parents or any one else.

But this was not all; for *Joseph* used frequently to relate two dreams which he had; the one, that as they were binding sheafs, his sheaf rose and stood in the midst of theirs; and that theirs made obeisance to his sheaf: the other, that the *Sun*, *Moon*, and eleven *stars*, paid obeisance to him also; both of which seemed to presage his future grandeur and elevation.

5. Now all these provocations put together, made *Joseph's* brothers turn so cruelly against him, that they resolved to make away with him the first opportunity that offered. And

Jacob accordingly sending the lad one day to see how his other sons went on, who kept their flocks in the fields, in a distant part of the country, they conspired together to slay the dreamer, as they called him. But *Reuben*, their eldest brother, dissuaded them from that bloody design, advising them, at the same time, rather to put them into a neighbouring pit than murder him; designing after they were withdrawn, to take him out again, and secretly convey him back to his father.

6. And this advice they listened to, so seizing poor *Joseph*, they stript off his fine cloaths, and put him down naked into the pit; and then they sat down to feast and make merry. But those unnatural brothers

thers had hardly began their feast, when some *Midianitish* merchants passed that way, their camels loaded with spices, and other goods, which they were carrying to the markets of *Egypt*, and to those people they agreed to sell *Joseph*, for thirty pieces of silver, thinking it was better to do this, than be guilty of his blood; so the merchants took *Joseph* with them, and when they arrived at their journey's end, they sold him again to *Potiphar*, captain of the guards to *Pharaoh* king of *Egypt*.

7. Mean while *Reuben*, as we have said before, having a desire to preserve *Joseph*, and being absent

when he was sold, returned to the pit, but not finding him there, gave way to the most excessive grief, and went to his brothers, telling them that he perceived they had made away with the boy, and he must never dare to look in his fathers face again. Hereupon they killed a kid, and dipping *Joseph's* coat in the blood, they brought it to their father, telling him that they found it so in the field, and that undoubtedly some wild beast or other had devoured him; which poor *Jacob* believing, he tore off his cloaths, and put ashes on his head, mourning after the custom of those days, and would take no comfort.

CHAPTER VII.

1. *Joseph's chastity, is thrown into prison.* 2. *Interprets the dreams of Pharaoh's servants there.* 3. *Interprets Pharaoh's dreams.* 4. *Is advanced to great dignity, and sees his brothers.* 5. *His behaviour to them.* 6. *The deaths of Jacob and Joseph.*

1. **B**UT mark the end which GOD ALMIGHTY brought of all this; and let us never despair, while we place our whole trust and confidence in his holy word and commandments.

I have already told you, that the merchants to whom *Joseph's* brothers had sold him, made money of their bargain again, as soon as they got into *Egypt*, by selling him to one *Potiphar*, a captain of the king's guard; and here he behaved with such diligence, and was so successful in every thing he undertook, that at last his master began

to observe him, and in a short time making him his steward, he put all his affairs under his management.

And in this situation *Joseph* might have lived very happily, had it not been for an adventure which befel him soon after. He was a very comely youth, and his master's wife was wicked enough to take a fancy to him. Nay, she had the impudence to desire in plain terms that he would come to bed to her; but he treating so infamous a proposal with the just horror and contempt which it deserved,

served, she determined to lay hold on a more favourable opportunity, accordingly, one day, when all the people of the house were abroad, except herself and the young man, she decoyed him into her apartment, and catching him in her arms, behaved in such a monstrous manner, that he had no other method of escaping her fury, than by making the best of his way out of her sight ; which he did, leaving his cloak behind him in the struggle.

This disappointment, as we may easily imagine, exasperated the wicked mistress, and at the same time, fearing, lest *Joseph* might betray her, she was determined to be beforehand with him. Whereupon making a most ter-

rrible out-cry, she brought all the people within hearing about her, and when her husband came home, shewing him *Joseph's* cloak, she swore that the unhappy youth had made an attempt to ravish her. This *Potiphar* believing, it is not to be wondered at if he was greatly incensed against his servant, and immediately threw poor *Joseph* into prison. However, GOD ALMIGHTY turned this misfortune to *Joseph's* advantage likewise.

2. He had not been very long there, before he grew exceedingly in the goaler's esteem ; in a word, he had the direction of the whole prison, and about this time two of the king's servants, his *cup-bearer*, and *chief-baker*, for some offence or other being shut up in the same place,

place, they had each of them on the same night two different dreams ; and *Joseph*, the next morning, observing them to look very dull and low-spirited, took the liberty to ask them the reason of it, which they told him in the following words.

I had last night a dream, said the *cup-bearer*, I fancied that I saw a vine with three branches, which all on a sudden budded, then blossomed, and so bore ripe grapes ; and from those I pressed wine into a cup, giving it into the king's hand as usual.

And said the *chief-baker*, I had a dream also : I fancied that I had on my head three wicker baskets, in the uppermost of which were several baked meats for the king's table, but

the birds came and eat them out of the basket.

To these *Joseph* answered, first, that the cup-bearer's three branches signified three days ; which time would not be exceeded before he was restored again to the king's favour ; and to the baker he told, that his three baskets were three days also, in which space his master would order him to be hanged. Now these things came out exactly according to his interpretation ; however, tho' the cup-bearer promised to remember *Joseph*, he had hardly left the prison, before he was out of his mind ; and it was two years and better ere he ever thought of mentioning him.

3. When king *Pharaoh* himself had an extraordinary dream ; he thought

D

he

he saw seven fat oxen come out of a river, and after that seven lean oxen, which eat up the fat ones; he dreamed also, that he saw seven full ears of corn grow out of the ground, which immediately afterwards were choaked up by seven blasted ones. He mention'd this extraordinary vision to his courtiers, and called his wise men and counsellors to explain it, but they all confessed their ignorance; when the cup-bearer told the king, that while he had been in prison a young *Hebrew* there, had interpreted a dream of his exactly. The king instantly ordered *Joseph* to be sent for, and telling him every thing as I have related it above, *Joseph* gave his interpretation in the following manner: he told *Pha-*

raoh, that his dreams signified seven years of plenty, which should immediately come to pass, and after those seven years of famine, which should succeed them again; and he advised the king to build store-houses and granaries, and lay up accordingly. *Pharaoh* was convinced of the justice of what he said, and at the same time telling him, that he knew no man in his kingdom so proper to provide against the coming danger as himself, he set *Joseph* over all his people, and ordered him to be obeyed accordingly.

4. Nor was *Joseph* remiss in his office, so that by the time the famine began to rage, he had managed every thing so prudently, that *Egypt* knew no want, while all the countries

tries round were starving, and imploring assistance from thence; and among the rest *Joseph's* brothers came up from *Canaan*, with money to buy food for themselves and their families.

Joseph no sooner saw them than nature began to work, for he had forgiven all their past cruelty, and finding that time had intirely worn him from their remembrance, he determined to try them severely; he asked therefore among many other things, whether they had any other brothers besides those he saw before him? to which they answered, that one brother of theirs, meaning *Joseph* himself, was dead, and that they had another at that time, a boy (*Benjamin*, *Joseph's* own brother)

who was at home with their old father, *Joseph* told them that he suspected the truth of this, and rather believed they were a company of spies: however, says he, if you are honest men go back and bring me this brother, whom you say is at home with your father; I shall detain one of you by way of surety, 'till the rest return; so his brothers went out of his presence, and when they came home with their provisions, behold every man had his money in the mouth of his sack, and at this they were frightened, thinking that *Joseph* had done it to trepan them.

At last all their corn being consumed they did not know how to act, for they knew to return to *Egypt*

without *Benjamin*, was to run into the mouth of destruction, and they were afraid to mention the thing to their father *Jacob*, because he loved the child so much, that he would never be persuaded to part with him. However, having no remedy, they at last told him every thing exactly as it happened; and after much intreaty, *Jacob* was wrought upon to trust *Benjamin* with them: but he told them that if they did not bring him back again safe, he should certainly die with grief.

Now the brothers returned to *Egypt* without fear; but coming before *Joseph*, as soon as he set eyes on his brother *Benjamin* he could not forbear weeping; and he desired that they would all dine

with him at his house, where he treated them nobly: but afterwards making as if he would suffer them to depart, he ordered one of his servants to convey a gold cup into *Benjamin's* sack of corn; this they knew nothing of, but were scarce gone out of the gates, when *Joseph* sent after them, charging them with the theft; which upon search being found, they all came back again greatly terrified, 'till *Joseph* calling them into an inner room, discovered who he was.

6. Now news being brought of this extraordinary adventure to king *Pharaoh*, he ordered that *Joseph* should send for his father and family to come down into *Egypt*, which command being complied with, old *Jacob* was introduced

duced to the king, and settled in the most fertile part of the country.

7. And *Jacob* being a very aged man, died with all his sons about him : and *Joseph* having lived for many years after in great plenty and magni-

ficence, and having seen his childrens children grown up, he died also, leaving a strict charge, that whenever the children of *Israel* went out of *Egypt* into the promised land, that they should take his bones along with them.

C H A P. VIII.

1. *Moses born.* 2. *Educated by Pharaoh's daughter.* 3. *Quits Egypt.* 4. *God appears to Moses.* 5. *Plagues of Egypt.* 6. *The children of Israel brought out of Egypt.*

1. **B**UT the happiness which the children of *Israel* had so long enjoyed in the kingdom of *Egypt*, was now at an end. For after *Joseph's* death, a new king also succeeding to the throne, the *Egyptians* began to grow jealous of their great increase, and in order to prevent the mischiefs which might attend

it, they began to oppress them with the most inhuman tyranny, setting them to all manner of laborious works, 'till at last finding, that in spite of all their endeavours to the contrary, they multiplied more and more ; *Pharaoh* thought of the following cruel expedient : he ordered, that all the males among the *Israelites*

lish children should be drowned as soon as born; and this command was executed with such rigour, that when a certain woman called *Iochabed*, the wife of *Amram* of the tribe of *Levi* was brought to bed of a son, though on account of his uncommon beauty, she contrived to conceal him two months, yet being afraid to keep him any longer she put him into a cradle made of rushes, and smearing it on the outside with some sort of slime, she laid him among the flags in the river *Nile*, and setting a little daughter, which she had called *Miriam*, to watch it, she went home, thinking her child more likely to escape there, than from the hands of the *Egyptian* officers.

2. Nor had *Miriam* been

long at her post, before she had an opportunity of carrying her mother a very satisfactory account; for soon after the king's daughter coming down to bathe herself, one of her attendants discovered the baby, and brought him to the princess, who was so much taken with the prettiness of the infant, and moved by the tears which it shed, that she determined to have it bred up; and when *Miriam*, who by this time had mixed among the ladies, offered to run and bring her a nurse, she approved of what the child said; so that *Moses* (for that was the name which the *Egyptian* princess gave the little boy) was once more delivered into his mother's hands: nor was she having now the royal authority for what she did, any longer

longer obliged to conceal him.

3. And when *Moses* grew up he was brought to the *Egyptian* court, where he was educated in all kind of polite learning, 'till going one day among his country-men, while they were at their task, he saw an *Egyptian* use a *Hebrew* so cruelly, that he could not contain his resentment: he drew his sword therefore and killed the man on the spot. However, he did not think it was safe after this to stay in *Egypt*, so without any more ado, he withdrew to a place called *Midian*, where *Jethro* reigned king; and here, marrying one of his daughters called *Zipporah*, he kept *Jethro's* sheep, according to the custom of those days. But the time was shortly to come, when

he was to take upon himself a more exalted office.

4. One day when *Moses* was in a field, near Mount *Horeb*, he saw a bush before him all on a flame; but what still surprised him more, was, that the bush still remain unconsumed. And when he was going nearer to search into the reason of this extraordinary sight; God called out to him, and commanded him to pull off his shoes, for the ground whereon he stood was holy. And to this God added, I am the God of your fathers, the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*. He then told *Moses*, that he had seen the afflictions of the *Israelites*; that he was determined to deliver them from their present slavery, and conduct them into the country he had so long

promised; therefore, be of good courage, said God to *Moses*, for I will send you to *Pharaoh* to demand the liberty of my people. The natural modesty of *Moses*, his fear, and, above all, his astonishment at this event, which rendered him incapable of knowing what to say, made him decline this great task: he therefore humbly besought God, on many accounts, to excuse him, 'till being at last convinced it was his duty to obey his maker in every thing, he submitted to whatever he thought proper to enjoyn. However, God, to render his faith more steady, and to shew him that he was all powerful, ordered *Moses* to throw a sheep-hook, which he had in his hand upon the ground, which was no

sooner done, than it instantly turned into a serpent; *Moses* affrighted was running away, but God to encourage him, bid him take it by the tail, when it suddenly resumed it's former shape. This was followed by another miracle, and God then telling *Moses*, that he would appear to a brother of his, which he had in *Egypt*, called *Aaron*, who should meet him on the way, strengthen his commission, and give him credit with the people; *Moses* departed, and leaving his wife and children with his father-in-law *Jethro*, he began his journey towards the kingdom of *Egypt*.

Moses being now advanced pretty far, God, according to his promise, conducted *Aaron* to meet him,

him, and the brothers being come together, *Moses* told all that God had commanded him, and the wonders he was to perform : and from hence they repaired to *Egypt*, and summoning the elders of the people together, *Aaron* delivers the message, which God had sent by *Moses*, and *Moses* straitway confirmed it, by doing several miracles in their sight. This revived the hearts of the poor *Israelites*, who thereupon believed and received them joyfully : and the brothers afterwards going to the *Egyptian* court, they were admitted into the king's presence, where they delivered their message in these words. Thus saith the Lord God of *Israel*, let my people go that they may celebrate a

feast to me in the desert : but the haughty *Pharaoh* treating them with the utmost contempt, and instead of complying with their demand, gave orders to his overseers, that they should augment the hardships of the *Hebrews*.

This threw those poor creatures into despair, so that meeting with *Moses* and *Aaron*, and unadvisedly giving way to their present passion, they discharged all their grief and anger upon them.

This was very afflicting to these good men, but God desired them to take comfort, for since *Pharaoh* had begun to harden his heart, he would permit him to go on in his obstinacy, and convince him by dreadful proofs, that he was the only true and powerful

erful God ; however, he said they should first go and perform a miracle in his sight. But this unfortunate prince, instead of having his eyes opened by that extraordinary evidence, rather grew more severe and haughty ; God therefore resolves to make use of more sensible scourges, and afflict the *Egyptians* with such a succession of plagues, as should oblige them to dismiss the enslaved *Israelites*.

5. The first of which was, that *Moses* turned all the rivers of *Egypt* into blood, which immediately stagnating, were so offensive, that the fish were suffocated, and the inhabitants obliged to dig for water in new places.

This was followed by one still more terrible : the

whole land of *Egypt* was instantly filled with frogs, which came among the houses, on the tables, nay, into the very beds of the people ; and this failing of the desired effect, the country was infested with lice, to which the dust was transformed ; *Pharaoh* still not submitting, millions of flies came from every corner darkening the very air, and putting the people to such misery, it was hardly to be born. However, *Pharaoh* was still hard-hearted, nor was he prevailed on to let the children of *Israel* depart, 'till all his cattle had been killed by the murrain ; all his subjects covered over with boils, and ulcers ; 'till so terrible a storm of hail came from Heaven, that it killed those it fell upon ; and

and beat in all the roofs of the houses. Nor was this all the punishment which his obstinacy brought upon him; for immediately after a strong wind blowing, brought such numbers of locusts, as in one night's time destroyed all the trees and fruits of the earth. And at last God determining to wound him in the severest manner: called *Moses* and *Aaron*, and spoke to them as follows, about midnight will I enter *Egypt*, and all the first-born of the land shall die, from the first-born of *Pharaoh*, to the first-born of the servant in the mill.

But to convince his own people of his care and indulgence, he instituted the passover: a feast ever after observed by the *Jews*, and kept on the following

fashion. Every family, or if one family was too little, two joined together, was on the fourteenth day of this month, to take a lamb or kid and kill it, it was to be a male of the first year without blemish; and when it was killed they were to take a bunch of hyssop, and dipping it in the blood, which for that end was preserved in a vessel, they were to wipe the door posts of every house, and they were not to stir out 'till the next morning. This was done to the intent, that when the Angel of the Lord should go from house to house to slay the first-born of the *Egyptians*, he seeing the blood smeared on the door-posts, might pass over the *Israelites* without doing them any hurt; there were
some

some other particulars attending this feast, as that the flesh was to be roasted whole, eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, it was also to be done in haste, standing with their cloaths on and their staves in their hands. All things thus prepared, God at midnight smote every first-born of the land of *Egypt*, and the wicked king at last fearing, that he himself should be the next victim of God's vengeance, desired the *Israelites* to go about their business, with their flocks and their herds, for he would stay them no longer. But first, *Moses* by the express command of God, directed his country-men to borrow jewels and plate from their *Egyptian* neighbours, who being supernaturally disposed

in their favour, the children of *Israel* went off laden with spoils, and thanking and praising God for the infinite mercy, he had been pleased to shew them.

5. Now the *Israelites* being thus relieved from their bondage and slavery, the Lord, for their greater encouragement and security, went before them in the day time like a pillar of smoke, and in the night like a pillar of fire; and he drew them round by the red sea: but they had scarcely gotten to the borders of it, when *Pharaoh* repenting of having let them go, summoned all the force which he could so suddenly raise, and putting himself at the head of them, went in pursuit of the *Israelites*. And on the sixth day after the departure out of *Egypt*,
he

he came up with them ; nor did he think there was any possibility of their escaping him, as they were closed on all sides : the sea in front, huge mountains on their flanks, and his own army on the rear ; nor were the poor *Israelites* a little shocked, when they beheld the approach of their old oppressor : nay, they began to revile *Moses* for having brought them into such inevitable destruction ; when the Lord said, lift up your rod and stretch

your hand over the sea, and *Moses* did so, and behold the waters divided, and the children of *Israel* marched through upon dry land ; and *Pharaoh* and his army attempting to follow them, *Moses* as soon as he was safe on the other side, stretched forth his wand again, when the waves suddenly uniting, the king of *Egypt* and his people were drowned, to the great honour of God, and the pleasure and astonishment of the *Israelites*.

CHAPTER IX.

1. *The Israelites enter the wilderness, and murmur for want of water.*
2. *Manna and quails are sent.* 3. *Moses brings water out of a rock.* 4. *Jethro arrives at the Israelitish camp.* 5. *God talks to Moses before the people, and he goes up into the mount.*

1. **G**OD having in this miraculous manner, delivered his people from the hands of their enemies, now led them up under the conduct of *Moses*, from the red sea into the wilderness : and here they encountered

encountered several little inconveniences, permitted by the author of all goodness, in order to convince them of his infinite power. Thus in the first place they came to, the waters were so exceedingly bitter, that it was morally impossible for any one to drink them: but that pious servant *Moses* had no sooner offered up his prayers to Heaven, than God shewed him a tree, the branches of which being thrown into the waters, immediately turned them as sweet as milk; and God promised *Moses* that while the people continued to follow his commandments, he would never fail to bless them. Nor is this promise less faithfully made to us, if by our wickedness we do not forfeit our right, like the un-

grateful children of *Israel*.

2. But these were the most perverse and blind generation, that ever provoked eternal justice. A proof of which immediately follows, when after the many miraculous instances of the divine mercy, which had already been shewn in their favour, they began to murmur again, because that in coming to pitch their tents at a place called *Sin*, they could not find an immediate supply of bread; but God heard their discontented speeches, and he rained bread from Heaven: nor in that only condescending to satisfy them, he afterwards sent such quantities of *quails*, that the ground about the camp was perfectly covered with them; this he repeated every morning and evening,

ning, and the bread was a sort of manna.

3. However, they still continued their doubts and repining; nay, in a few days they had the unparalleled ingratitude to abraid *Moses* and *Aaron*, for having brought them out of *Egypt* to starve them in the wilderness; because about this time, they laboured under a small scarcity of water: so *Moses* by the direction of GOD ALMIGHTY went up to a rock, and striking it with his rod in the sight of all the people, it began to pour forth water, and *Moses* gave the place a name, in reference to the peoples murmuring and doubting whether GOD was among them or not.

After this the children of *Israel* overcame a numerous army, which was

brought against them by a king called *Amalek*; but there was this wonderful circumstance attending them. *Moses* gave the command of the *Israelites* to a young man called *Joshua*, and went to the top of a neighbouring hill with *Aaron* and *Hur* to view the battle; now it was observed, that whenever *Moses* raised up his hands, in one of which he held the rod given him by GOD, that the *Israelites* prevailed, but, on the contrary, whenever he let them down again, the enemy had the better; for this reason *Aaron* and *Hur* supported his hands, 'till their countrymen had gotten a compleat victory. And *Moses* built an altar, and called the name of that place *Jehovah-Nissi*.

4. I need

4. I need not remind you I hope of *Jethro* the father-in-law of *Moses*; I make no doubt, but that you perfectly remember every thing I have related with regard to him, as that he was king of *Midian*, and that when *Moses* went into the land of *Egypt*, he left his wife and children under his care and protection. This *Jethro* then hearing of the wonderful thing, which God had performed in behalf of his son-in-law, and the nation which followed him, in this place, came to pay him a visit, and the Holy Scriptures in particular mention, that after having returned *Moses* his wife and children, *Jethro* gave him several pieces of good advice, to which that excellent man not only listened

with attention, but guided his future conduct by them, being as great a proof of his wisdom as of his virtue; since 'tis not only our duty, but we shall always find it for our interest, to obey the will of our parents. And after much affection and kindness having passed between them, *Jethro* returned to his own country, while *Moses* led the children of *Israel* into the wilderness of *Sinai*.

5. And whereas God had hitherto spoken to *Moses* in private only, and as we may suppose chiefly in dreams and visions, he now thought proper, in honour to his beloved servant, to give a testimony of his intercourse with him before the whole people. Wherefore calling *Moses* to him

him, he commanded, that the people should sanctify themselves, and wash their cloaths; for, said he, on the third day I will come down in their sight, upon mount *Sinai*, and they shall hear me speak to you from a cloud, but, at the same time, he commanded, that there should be a bound set round about, beyond which none of the people should presume to advance on pain of death.

And *Moses* did every thing according to God's command. When on the third day, in the morning, there was a dreadful storm of thunder and lightening, and a thick cloud, at the same time, covering the mountain, at last a trumpet sounded, which was the signal for *Moses* to bring up the people. Who advanced

trembling, and *Moses* speaking, God answered him again.

And *Moses* going up into the mountain, at this time, received part of the Law; but shortly after the *Bible* expressly tells us, that not only *Moses* but all the elders of *Israel* saw God there. However, it is my duty to inform you, that the word in the *Hebrew* language, which we translate God, may also be rendered *angel*, in which sense we ought certainly to take it here; and some days after this, *Moses* was called by God into the mount by himself, and there he remained forty days and forty nights. We shall now see how the favoured *Israelites* employed their leisure during his absence.

CHAPTER X.

1. *The peoples idolatry.* 2. *Of Aaron and his family.* 3. *The blasphemer and sabbath-breaker stoned.* 4. *Miriam and Aaron rebel.* 5. *Spies are sent to view the country.* 6. *The people transgress, and are punished.*

1. **T**HE *Israelites* had been so long in *Egypt*, that it is not to be wondered at, if they were tainted with the vices of that country, among which idolatry was one of the most notorious. *Moses*, therefore, had not been absent from them any great while, before they began to grow uneasy, and despairing of ever seeing him any more, they came to *Aaron*, insisting that he should provide gods who might be a conductor and preserver to them in their present situation; nor did *Aaron*, as he should have done, reprove them for this abominable

proposal, but instead of that, being weak and wicked enough to comply with their request, he desired that they would break off the gold rings which were in the ears of their wives and daughters, and bring them to him; and out of these materials he made them an idol like a calf, which this ungrateful and besotted people were stupid enough to worship, eating and drinking before it, and then rising up to play.

But though they had turned their back from God, his eyes were still upon them, and in the first heat of his anger, at seeing his

his Divine Majesty thus openly affronted, he resolved to destroy so vile a people at once, from the face of the earth; nor would he have delayed his vengeance a moment, had not *Moses*, falling prostrate, besought him to remember the promise which he had made to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, nor did he fail to urge what a handle the heathen nations would make of it, should they at last see the *Israelites* forsaken by that God, who had performed so many wonders in their behalf. GOD, therefore, whose mercy is no less extensive than his justice, restrained his hand; but ordered *Moses* instantly to go down from the mountain, which command being obeyed, that Holy Man advanced towards the

camp, bearing a stone table, on which the ten commandments were engraved by the finger of God himself. Yet, so great was his passion, when at a distance he beheld the molten calf, and observed the people dancing round it, that losing all respect, he struck this sacred work to the ground, breaking it all to pieces. He then severely chid his brother *Aaron* for giving way to the importunities of an idle multitude, and calling on those who were the worshippers of the true God, to come on his side, the tribe of *Levi* immediately separated themselves, and the idolaters which fell by the sword that day were no less than three thousand.

2. However, tho' God ALMIGHTY was satisfied
E 2 with

with this punishment for the present, he absolutely refused to go among them any more; for he said they were so impure a race, that he should one time or other break out and consume them. But he desired that *Moses* would conduct them to the promised land, and he would give an *angel* charge over them, which sorely afflicted the *Israelites*, seeing that they had deprived themselves of the Almighty's presence by their own vain conduct. And about this time *Moses* took the liberty of desiring to see God's face, but was answered that could not be, since no man must see the Creator's face and live; notwithstanding which God, to give a proof of his great condescension, to satisfy *Moses*, passed by

with his back parts towards him; and after that, by God's command, a rich tabernacle was made, and *Aaron* and his sons were called to the priesthood, and sanctified accordingly.

Only *Nadab* and *Abihu* had reason to repent of this their great elevation, and that thus their own neglect and disobedience, for tho' it was a positive command from GOD ALMIGHTY himself, that no fire should be made use of to consume the sacrifices on his altar, but what immediately proceeded from Heaven; yet these rash young men, without paying any regard to their duty, put common fire into one of the censers, but they paid severely for their want of obedience, for fire from God immediately breking upon them burnt them both

to

to cinders ; nor were their friends allowed so much as to mourn for their untimely end, but they were taken from the tabernacle and buried without side of the camp.

3. There is nothing more frequently recommended to us by God, than a due respect to his own holy name ; nor is it enough that we do not absolutely blaspheme our Maker, we must even keep such a guard upon our tongues, as not to speak any thing which in the remotest sense tends that way : all naughty words, any thing like an oath therefore or a curse is terrible ; and we should wonder, indeed, when reprobates guilty of such wickedness are not immediately struck dead, since we find that in the days of *Moses* God

commanded a man, only for mentioning his name irreverently, to be stoned to death ; which was accordingly executed : nor did he make a less terrible example of another wretch who broke the sabbath, by gathering up sticks on that sacred holy-day, who was instantly put into prison, and afterwards condemned to suffer the same punishment.

4. Thus did God ALMIGHTY do justice to particular offenders : but the *Children of Israel* had so often broke his commandments, that it was requisite for his honour as well as their amendment, to inflict some general chastisement, and he more than once threatened totally to disinherit them, while he transferred his favour to some

more worthy nation, which he could easily raise up; but *Moses* still implored his mercy, and such was the goodness of that all-powerful Being, that, in regard to so pious a servant, he was at last content to limit their punishment to a forty years wandering in the wilderness, 'till which time was expired, he resolved, that they should not enter into the promised possession. And this was a rule which the *Israelites* had for their several rests and marches. When the cloudy pillar stood upon the *tabernacle* they pitched their tents round about it, and 'till that rose again, they never presumed to leave the place; yet did they give God many provocations, and as often felt the effects of his ven-

geance; but in particular *Aaron* and *Miriam*, the brother and sister of *Moses*, were severely dealt with for some disrespectful behaviour of theirs towards their brother; *Korah* also rebelling, was swallowed up and burnt, he and all his adherents. Nay, such was the justice of God, not to be swayed into partiality for any one, that when his beloved servant, when even *Moses* himself, erred, he also became the object of his wrath: for, being arrived a second time at a place where they could get no water, the people began to murmur, upon which God ordered *Moses*, as he had done before, to take his rod, and striking a rock to make water flow out of it; but *Moses*, in the execution of this command, expressing

expressing himself in a manner as if he doubted, or at least feared, the the power or promise of the Great Creator, God told him, that for that crime he should never live to see the fulfilment of his promise to the *Children of Israel*, while *Aaron* who was a party concerned in his guilt was taken off immediately.

And God declared *Joshua* the successor of *Moses*, to lead the *Children of Israel* into the land which he was going to give them, and having now settled every thing relating to the law with the utmost exactness, and having seen the

people overcome a multitude of enemies, who attempted to oppose their passage on every side, *Moses*, in the hundred and twentieth year of his age, went up into mount *Nebo*, from whence affording him a sight of the *Israelites* future country, God was pleased to take him to himself, burying his body where no man could find it. And the *Israelites* mourned for *Moses* as for a father. Nor did any prophet, either before or since, save only our blessed Lord and Saviour *JESUS CHRIST*, ever leave so great a character behind him.

CHAPTER XI.

1. *The Israelites pass Jordan.* 2. *Jericho miraculously taken.* 3. *The covetous man burnt.* 4. *The sun and moon stand still at the command of Josphua.* 5. *Several acts of the Israelites; with his death.*

1. **Y**OU have already been informed how God was pleased to appoint *Josphua* the successor of *Moses*; and we find that after the death of that great prophet, He thought proper to reveal himself to him much in the same manner. And *Josphua*, by the command of God, led the people over the river *Jordan*, in which passage there was this wonderful particular, that as soon as the priests, who bore the ark of the covenant, set their feet in the water, the waves immediately gathered themselves up on each side, leaving an open space

between, so that the *Children of Israel* passed over on dry ground; and in commemoration of this remarkable event, they set up twelve stones (a stone for every tribe), which remained as a testimony for many ages after.

And the *Israelites* being now entered upon the land of promise, the first action of any moment which they performed there, was the destruction of that famous but wicked city, *Jericho*; to which having sent spies, they were lodged in the house of one *Rahab* an idle woman; but covenanting that they should spare her and

and her family when they took the town, she hid them from the citizens, who suspected their errand, and letting them down from her window, they pursuing her advice got off safe.

2. Now these *spies* encouraged the people of *Israel* to attack the city, but God being willing to give them still another proof of his miraculous favour, and to shew them that strength and numbers were unnecessary to those who were assisted by his all-powerful arm; ordered, that the *ark* of the covenant only should be carried seven times round *Jericho*, preceded by seven priests, blowing each a trumpet of ram's-horn, and at the seventh time, on a particular signal, the people

were ordered to give a great shout, and immediately the walls of *Jericho* fell to the ground; and the *Israelites* entered the city, putting every man, woman, and child, to the sword, only sparing *Rahab* and her family, according to the promise of the *spies*.

3. There is hardly any sin of a more pernicious consequence than that of covetousness; none certainly can be more opposite to the nature of God; of which truth we have a remarkable instance in the case of *Achan* an *Israelite*, who after the taking of *Jericho*, though all the spoils were expressly cursed, had some rich garments and gold in the bottom of his tent, designing to convert them to his own use. Orders had been before given

given for destroying every thing, except only such moveables as were immediately dedicated to the service of the altar; nor was God to be deceived by cunning, he knew what the covetous *Achan* had done, and to manifest his utter abhorrence of such actions, in the very next battle which the *Israelites* fought they were discomfited. He then called His servant *Joshua*, telling him there was something unlawful among them, 'till which was removed they must not expect his favour; and at last the matter being found out, *Achan*, with all his family, nay, even his very cattle, and the vile treasure for which he had dared to disobey his Maker, were brought out of the camp, and then burnt to ashes.

4. After this GOD ALMIGHTY fought again on the side of the *Israelites*; and they took the city of *Ai* by a stratagem; upon which all the people round about formed a league to oppose them, only the cunning *Gibeonites* contriving, by fraud, to obtain their friendship and protection, were condemned to perpetual slavery. And five kings came against *Joshua* in one day, with their armies, when going up against them, he not only got the better, but God rained hail-stones upon them of such prodigious magnitude, that there were more slain by that means than by the swords of the *Israelites*. Then spake *Joshua* in the day when the Lord delivered up the *Amorites* before the Children of *Israel*;

Israel; and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon, in the valley of Ajalon: and the Sun stood still, and the Moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves of their enemies. And there was no day like to that, either before nor after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man. And Joshua dragged the five kings out of a cave where they had hid themselves after the battle, and he hanged them up.

5. Fearful and wonderful are all the works of God, thus did he manifest himself in favour of his people *Israel*; nor thus on-

ly, for they gained many succeeding battles; no nation could stand before them; so they began to settle themselves in the country, parcelling out the land which they had conquered among the several tribes. And *Joshua* took up his residence in the city *Timnath-Serab* in mount *Ephraim*. And he died there after having exhorted the people, being an hundred and ten years old. And the *Children of Israel* buried *Joshua*, continuing to serve God, and act according to all his statutes and commands, for many years after.

CHAPTER XII.

1. *Deborah judges Israel* 2. *Jael kills Sisera.* 3. *Gideon delivers the people.* 4. *Jephthah's vow.* 5. *Sampson is born.* 6. *Delilah's falsehood.* 7. *Sampson dies.*

1. **J**OSHUA being now dead, the Israelites, from a peaceable possession of the land of *Caanan*, had no longer any occasion for a general; they put themselves therefore under a new form of government; their chief magistrates were called judges: and by these they were ruled for a great number of years, often offending God, and as often feeling the effects of his resentment; when *Deborah*, a woman of great wisdom and piety, was advanced to the honour of that high office. She was a prophetess, the wife of *Lapidoth*, and at this time the people for some wickedness they had committed,

being delivered into the hands of an enemy, the commander of whose army was a man named *Sisera*. She chose out one from the Israelites called *Barak*, he was a youth the son of *Abinoam* of *Kedesb-naphtali*, and desiring him to head a band of his countrymen against the common foe, she told him that God would give him a victory. So *Deborah* and *Barak* went up towards mount *Tabor*, with ten thousand men, and there they overcame *Sisera* and all his host, though greatly superior to theirs, and strengthened besides with nine hundred chariots of iron.

2. Now

2. Now *Sisera* being pursued after the battle, thought the most likely way for him to escape, would be to leave his horses and attendants, and take to his feet. He alighted therefore from his chariot, and making the best of his way, at last arrived at the tent of one *Jael*, the wife of *Heber* the *Kenite*. And *Jael* went out to meet *Sisera*, saying, turn in my lord, turn in to me and fear not. And when he had turned into her tent, she covered him with a mantle. And desiring a draught of water, she gave him some milk; this, with the fatigue as we may naturally suppose of his flight, soon set him to sleep; and now the chief enemy of the *Israelites* was in their power. So *Jael*

took a nail and a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him, and driving the nail through his temples, she fastened his head to the ground. And this seemingly ungenerous and cruel action, was pre-ordained by the all-wise Creator, to let the *Israelites* see that the weakest instrument in his hands, were more effectual than all the might and power upon earth.

The children of *Israel* being again set free, behaved tolerably well for some time; however, not being able to persist in that good course, they once more began to run into the vice of their neighbours, committing idolatry, and all sorts of infamous actions, at which God being incensed, he delivered them afresh into the hands of the

the Medianites, under whom they endured a seven years bondage.

3. Nor did he relieve them from their insupportable burden 'till quite broken in spirit they raised their cry to heaven; when ever ready to redress, upon penitence, and promise of future good behaviour, he gave them another proof of his protection, by raising up *Gideon* for their deliverance.

Now *Gideon* was a young man, the son of *Joash*, when being one day thrashing in a barn, an angel appeared to him, and told him, that he was the person whom God had pitched on for the deliverance of his people. *Gideon* it seems did not know who he was, for he immediately went into the house, and bring-

ing forth flesh meet and other victuals, intreated the stranger to sit down. But the angel ordering him to take the flesh, and lay it on the top of a neighbouring rock, he consumed it with fire in a miraculous manner before *Gideon's* face, and forthwith vanished. There was now no longer doubt about the nature of the person he had seen, and being afterwards directed in a dream, *Gideon* rose up in the night-time, cut down a grove, and destroyed an altar raised by the *Midianites*, to their idol god *Baal*. This incensed those people, they raised an army, and *Gideon* supported by God met them in the field with 32000 men. But the Lord ordered him to proclaim, that whosoever was afraid should

should quit the army, least the *Israelites* should boast of being saved by their own numbers. And hereupon, 22000 men retired to their own homes, but God still thinking the remaining 10000 too many, ordered *Gideon* to carry them down to the water, and to chuse only those that lapped water like a dog, and not those that bowed down on their knees to drink; which reducing their number to 300 men, with these God most miraculously was pleased to deliver his people, and destroy at one time 120,000 of the *Midianites*, together with several of their princes. And thereby the *Israelites* were entirely delivered from the *Midianitish* yoke.

4. One would imagine

that this signal act of mercy, should have rendered the *Jews* the most zealous worshippers of God, to all future generations; but it was far otherwise, for after *Gideon's* death, they returned again to gross idolatry, nor did they desist from that abominable practice, 'till God had raised up against them the numerous armies of the *Ammonites*, which struck such a consternation through *Israel*, that they did not know where to fly to. At this time then *Jephthah* the *Gileadite* appeared to defend them. He was a man of great valour, but in one instance guilty of unpardonable rashness; for being on the eve of a battle, he vowed a vow, that if the LORD would deliver his enemies into his hands, what-

whatsoever came first out of his house to meet him, should be offered for a burnt sacrifice; and having totally overcome the *Ammonites*. On his returning home, the first person that came out of his house, was his only daughter and child, with timbrels and dances to meet him.

Nothing could be more afflicting than this sight to *Jephthah*, which turned all his triumph into mourning: he acquainted his beloved daughter, with what he had done, who with admirable resignation submitted to it, and intreated him not to depart from his vow, out of tenderness to her. However, it is by no means clear, that *Jephthah* offered his daughter for a burnt sacrifice. And I rather believe he did not, since

such were abominable to God, and would have been still a greater crime if possible, than his perjury. All we can gather of this matter from the Bible, is, that *Jephthah's* daughter being permitted to go upon the mountains two months with her companions, to bewail her virginity, that on her return, *Jephthah* did with her according to the vow that he had vowed. However, it is generally believed, that he only dedicated her life in a special manner to the service of God

5. Now *Jephthah* being dead, the *Israelites*, after having been governed by several other judges, fell at last into the hands of the *Philistines*. Indeed the various crimes they had committed during that series of years, deserved

deserved no less a punishment; yet God still mindful of his promise to his servant *Abraham*, would not abandon them entirely, and at this time there being a man whose name was *Manoah*, of the tribe of *Dan*, an angel appeared to him and his wife, giving them an assurance, that they should have a son, who in process of time, should bring his country out of their present bondage. Nor was this prediction long in coming to pass, for *Samson* being born shortly after, and growing to man's estate, cast his eye on a woman at *Timnath*, of the daughters of the *Philistines*, whom he desired his father and mother to procure for his wife. *Manoah* opposed his choice at first, but afterwards con-

sidering better of the matter, he and his wife went with their son towards *Timnath*, and as *Samson* was at some distance from them, in their way, *behold a young lion roared against him, and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent the lion as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand; but he told not his father and mother, of what he had done.* So proceeding on their journey, and gaining the consent of the young woman and her parents, a day was resolved on for the nuptials of *Samson*.

The feasts at the *Jewish* marriages, were very magnificent; there is no doubt therefore, that *Samson's* was equal to any of his neighbours, and having on his return to his father's house,

F

before

before he came to be married, found a nest of bees with honey, in the carcass of the young lion he had killed; he propounded this riddle to thirty young men of the *Philistines*, who came to make merry with him on his wedding-day. *Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong, sweetness*, promising thirty changes of raiment, and other things of value, if within a fixed time they could expound the same; but provided they could not, they were to give him a like reward. Now, the set term being almost elapsed, they prevailed on *Samson's* wife, to get the secret out of him, which being revealed to them, so enraged him, that he killed thirty *Philistines*, giving their cloaths in contempt to the expounders

of the riddle; and after this in his absence, his wife being given to another man, he caught three hundred foxes, and tying them tail to tail, with fire-brands between each, he let them loose among the standing corn of the *Philistines*; consuming not only that, but their vineyards, and olives. This enraging those people, they burnt both his wife and her father; whereupon *Samson* smote them hip and thigh, with great slaughter; and dwelt upon the top of a rock. Now the *Philistines* being gathered together, for revenge, the men of *Judab* persuaded *Samson* to let them bind him with cords, and deliver him up to the *Philistines*; who seeing him bound, gave a great shout, upon which
the

the spirit of the LORD coming upon *Samson*, he snapt the new cords, as if they had been burnt flax, and finding the jaw-bone of an ass, he slew with that simple weapon, upwards of a thousand *Philistines*.

6. But of what little consequence is strength or wisdom, if we give ourselves up to vice. *Samson*, that could not be overcome by multitudes, was at last destroyed by a single woman.

The lords of the *Philistines*, having sought all opportunities to be revenged of *Samson*, to no purpose, at last had recourse to a woman, named *Delilah*, for whom he had a great affection; offering her mighty rewards, if she could prevail upon him to reveal wherein his great strength

lay. Three several times he amused her with wrong accounts, and so escaped the snare laid for him: But at length, *when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him so, that his soul was vexed unto death, he told her all his heart, and said unto her, there hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.* *Delilah* hereupon making him sleep upon her knees, sent for the lords of the *Philistines*, and caused a man to shave off the seven locks of his head, and his strength went from him; and the *Philistines* took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down.

down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house. And thus was Samson severely punished, for revealing his secrets to a wicked prostitute.

7. But in a little time Samson's hair beginning to grow again, his strength also returned: mean while the Philistines triumphed exceedingly in their conquest; and on a time making a sacrifice in gratitude to their god Dagon, who they supposed had delivered their enemy into their hands, being very merry,

they sent for Samson to make them sport; who being brought, and placed between the two pillars that supported the house, he took one in each hand, and calling upon God to assist him that once, to revenge himself for his two eyes, and desiring to die with them, *he bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein: so the dead, which he slew at his death, were more than they, which he slew in his life.*

CHAPTER XIII.

The history of Ruth.

HONOUR, says the ALMIGHTY, *your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land*

which the Lord thy God giveth thee. These are the words of the fifth commandment; and as we find the

the blessing therein promised to dutiful children, most wonderfully fulfilled in the history of *Ruth*, I shall in this place, my dear little readers, lay her whole story before you; at the same time most humbly beseeching the Divine providence, that it may be so engraven on your hearts, as to bring forth that good fruit necessary, to entitle you to a like reward.

In the course of this history, you must have frequently observed, that the eastern countries are extremely subject to scarcities, and famine; and the holy scripture informs us, that it was in the midst of one of those national distresses, when a woman of the *Israelites*, named *Naomi*, together with her husband, and her two sons,

went into the land of *Moab*, in order to procure themselves bread; and here her two sons, after having married each of them a wife from among the people of that country, died with her husband, leaving their widows to shift for themselves, in the best manner they were able.

Now *Naomi* being informed that corn began to grow plenty once more, in the land of *Judah*, thought of returning again to her native place; she endeavoured therefore to persuade *Orpah* and *Ruth*, the widows of her deceased sons, to leave her in her misfortunes, and return to their mother's house, where they would probably be less exposed to the hardships her poverty and affliction must needs involve them

them in: and Orpah being moved by her arguments, took leave of her mother; but Ruth, having more piety, and a stronger faith in God's providence, said to Naomi, *intreat me not to leave thee, or return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if I ought but death part thee and me.* When Naomi, seeing she was stedfastly resolved, desisted from her persuasions; and they two went until they were come to Bethlehem.

It was the beginning of barley-harvest, when Naomi and Ruth, arrived at

Bethlehem; and Ruth going to glean in the fields of Boaz, a very wealthy relation of Naomi's late husband, Boaz cast his eyes upon her; and being informed who she was, he applauded her dutiful behaviour to her mother-in-law, and enjoined her to glean in no other field but his, during the whole time of harvest, and to keep fast by his maidens; and after she came to glean, he ordered his servants, that they should throw handfuls on purpose for her to take up; which they did, insomuch, that when she had beat out that she had gathered, it was a large sack of barley.

Naomi, as we may guess, rejoiced not a little, at Boaz's kindness to her daughter-in-law; and being

CH
being
his
to
Ruth
of his
ing-f
winn
and
down
sleep
and
him.
being
he av
was
find
but
self,
the r
accor
custo
kin
choic
set h
indisc
her,
neare

being willing to improve his favourable disposition to her, she commanded *Ruth* to watch the place of his repose, in the threshing-floor, where he was to winnow barley that night; and when he was laid down, and was fallen asleep, to uncover his feet, and to lay herself down by him. *Ruth* obeyed, and being laid down by him, he awoke at midnight, and was at first surprised, to find a woman at his feet; but *Ruth* revealing herself, and claiming of him the right of marrying her, according to the *Jewish* custom, as being her near kinsman. he applauded her choice, in that she had not set her heart on a young, indiscreet man; and told her, that there was still a nearer relation than he, of

whom he would require to perform the duty of nearest kinsman; and if he declined it, he himself would marry her. And in the morning presenting her with six measures of barley, he dismissed her, with much civility and kindness.

Nor did *Boaz* rest 'till he had made good his promise to *Ruth*, for having, as was the custom, required publickly, the nearest kinsman to marry her, and and he having declined it, *Boaz* took witnesses of it, and espoused her himself: and in process of time, she conceived, and bore a son, who was called *Obed*, who was the father of *Jesse*, the father of king *David*; from which stock, according to the flesh, afterwards descended our blessed Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*.

And thus gloriously, for an example to all children, was *Ruth* rewarded for her filial duty to her mother-in-law.

CHAP. XIV.

1. *The birth of Samuel.* 2. *His administration.* 3. *King Saul.*
4. *He displeases God.* 5. *David kills Goliath.* 6. *The death of Samuel.* 7. *Nabal's curtness.* 8. *The death of Saul.*

NOW there was a man named *Elkanah*, who had two wives, one of which *Peninnah*, had children; but *Hannah* the other was barren. This was sufficient to make them live uneasy together. Accordingly they spent their time in continual envy and upbraiding, 'till *Hannah* going one time up to the house of God at *Shiloh*; she kneeled down there and prayed devoutly, and if God would please to grant her a son, she promised to devote him all the days of his life to his

service. Her prayers were heard, and in a proper time she brought forth a son, whom she called *Samuel*. And after he was come to a fit age, she brought him to *Shiloh*, and in a very joyful manner, presented him to *Eli* the priest, who gladly received, and immediately clothed him in a proper habit, that he might attend on the service of the tabernacle. Now *Eli* was a very good man himself. but he had two sons, *Hophni* and *Phineas*, who were meer libertines. Nor did he chastise

chastise them as his authority required, 'till at length God was so provoked, that he foretold the utter destruction of his family to *Samuel*, which was the first revelation he made to this young prophet, and it was shortly after brought to pass. For the people in the joy of their hearts, to find that they had once more got a prophet among them, some few years after, attempting to free themselves from the yoke of the *Philistines*, under which they had long suffered; they were routed, and not routed only, but they lost the ark of God, which they had carried with them into the battle, and this was so severe an affliction to old *Eli*, that though both his sons were killed in the ac-

tion, the bare news of that alone, threw him into a fit, in which he fell down and broke his neck; a daughter-in-law dying at the same time in childbirth, which in some measure, was the ruin of his whole house.

2. The *Philistines* having thus got possession of the ark, carried it in triumph to one of their principal cities, but finding themselves sorely tormented with plagues upon that account, as well as that wherever it came, their idols fell down before it, they were glad to return it to the *Israelites* again; this they accordingly did, with some presents, and it being received with great joy by the people, *Samuel*, who had now entered upon his prophetic administration, took that

that opportunity of bringing them to a sense of their manifold transgressions. They wept therefore, and held a solemn fast, which was so acceptable to God, that in a little time, they gained such a signal victory over the *Philistines*, as prevented those idolaters from venturing to molest them for a great while. After this action, the most part of *Samuel's* government, was employed in a peaceable administration of justice; but as he grew in years, he appointed his sons, *Joel* and *Abiah*, to the execution of that office, who became so mercenary, and corrupt, that the elders of *Israel* came to *Samuel* in a body, demanding to have a king set over them, as there was in other nations.

This demand was by no means agreeable to the prophet, however he consulted God upon it, who answered, that he should comply with the people; but first ordered, that he should inform them of the many inconveniences that would attend the completion of their request. When the people still persisting, God tells *Samuel*, that he will not fail to give them a king.

3. Now *Saul*, the son of *Kish*, being sent to seek some of his father's asses, which had gone astray, came to *Samuel*, to try if he could give him any intelligence of them. And God having apprized *Samuel*, that he was the person ordained to reign over *Israel*; as soon as he saw him, he shewed him all the

the respect that was due to his future character: and having anointed him king, he foretold him several events which should befall him on his return home, in token of the truth, of his designation to that office. But this happened only between *Saul* and *Samuel* in private, he was afterwards chosen publicly by lot, nor had he been many days upon the throne, before there happened a fit occasion for him to exert himself. The people of *Jabesh-Gilead* on the other side of the *Jordan*, being oppressed by the *Ammonites* they sent to demand aid of king *Saul*, and he having summoned all *Israel* to come to their assistance, so totally routed and dispersed the enemy, that scarce two of them were

left together. This victory raised their new king's fame to a great degree, but at length he forfeited the divine favour, in the following manner.

4. His commission was utterly to destroy the *Amalekites*, but instead of executing this, he saved *Agag* their king, and the best of their cattle alive. And when *Samuel* came to expostulate the matter with him, his pretence was, that what he had spared, was in pure respect to God; but *Samuel*, who knew very well, that this reserve was made out of avarice, first laid before him the iniquity of his conduct, and then declared God's immovable purpose of taking the kingdom from his family. After which, *Samuel* by the express commands of the
LORD,

LORD, privately anointed *David*, who being particularly skilled in musick, was shortly afterward called to court, in order to divert a melancholy kind of madness, which had seized upon the king. But it was some months subsequent to his return from thence to his father *Jesse's* house again, that he had an opportunity of manifesting himself in the face of all *Israel*.

6. The *Philistines* had not long before, received a remarkable defeat from *Saul*; but having now recruited their forces, they took the field again, when a champion named *Goliath*, of a prodigious gigantick stature, came out of the camp of the *Philistines*, challenging any one of the *Hebrews* to a single com-

bat; but none durst venture upon it, 'till young *David* having heard what reward the king had promised to the person who should kill him; viz. the the princess his own daughter for a wife, he was moved by a divine impulse to accept of the challenge, and taking only his staff, a sling, and five smooth stones out of a brook that ran by, he advanced towards the *Philistine*, who perceiving him to be little more than a boy, thought it was done in contempt, and swore to cut him to pieces, the very moment he came at him; but *David's* reply was of another kind, that he came against him not in any confidence of his own strength, but in the name of GOD, at which words, letting fly a stone, it hit the giant's forehead

forehead with such force, that he fell flat, and *David* ran up to him, and with *Goliath's* own sword cut off his head. Every one admired the author of this gallant action, but none so much as *Jonathan*, the king's son, who contracted the tenderest friendship for *David*. Yet the promised reward he was deprived of, for *Saul* began to envy *David*, and tho' he some time after this, gave him another of his daughters in marriage upon very hard conditions, yet he more than once laid plots against his life, and even attempted with his own hands to kill him.

6. These proceedings drove *David* into banishment, where he gathered a little army, living some-

times with them in the mountains, and sometimes among the neighbouring infidels; nor would he, tho' he had *Saul* twice in his power, lift his hand against the Lord's anointed. And *David* having paid a visit to *Samuel*, the scripture tells us, that great prophet died. But I cannot close the subject of *Saul's* hatred to *David*, without mentioning the faithful friendship of his son *Jonathan*, who though he saw the king commit the most horrid cruelties upon any that presumed to support *David*, yet loved him as his own soul, and never fail to give him notice of whatever evil his father intended against him.

7. And by this time several hundred persons having resorted to *David*, he hearing

hearing that *Nabal*, a very rich man, whose shepherds he had formerly protected, was shearing his sheep nigh hand, sent to remind him of his civility to his servants, and desired him to send him some provisions, or whatsoever he could spare. But *Nabal*, being *churlish and evil in his doings*, answered David's servants, and said, *who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants now-a-days, that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh, that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not, whence they be?* So David's young men went again, and told him all those sayings.

David, being exasperated at this churlish answer,

ordered all his followers to gird on their swords, and vowed by the morning light, to leave not a man alive of all *Nabal's* family. But the servants of *Nabal*, fearing what might happen, went to their master's wife *Abigail*, and informed her of their apprehensions, and of the civilities they had before received at *David's* hands; who thereupon took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, with other provisions; and having loaden several asses with them, she set out with divers of her servants, unknown to her husband, and met *David* on full march with his men, in order to destroy *Nabal's* house and family: but being appeased by her graceful demeanour and humility,

lity, he received her and her presents kindly, and was diverted from his purpose: and *Abigail* being very beautiful, as well as discreet, and *Nabal* dying for vexation when he was told what had happened, *David* took her to wife.

8. Now *Saul* being about to go up against the *Philistines*, it was foretold to him, that the LORD had rent his kingdom from him, and given it to *David*; and that, on the next day, GOD would deliver him, and the *Israelites* with him, into the hands of the *Philistines*; and that he and his sons, should be with them in death. This terrible prediction so affected *Saul*, that he fell *strait-way all along on the earth, and there was no strength in him*; and when he reco-

vered, he would neither be comforted nor refreshed.

According to the prophet's prediction however, the next day both armies having engaged on mount *Gilboa*, the *Israelites* were discomfited, and *Saul's* sons *Jonathan*, *Abinadah*, and *Malchishua*, being slain, and himself sore wounded, he said unto his armour-bearer, *draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised come, and thrust me through, and abuse me*. But his armour-bearer refusing, *Saul* took a sword and fell upon it; which when his armour-bearer saw, he likewise fell upon his sword, and died with him. And when the *Philistines* found *Saul* among the slain, they cut off his head, sent his armour to *Ashtaroth*, and fastened his body

body to the walls of *Beth-shan*, together with the bodies of his sons ; which afterward were rescued from them, by the inhabitants of *Jabesh-Gilead*, who de-

cently interred their bodies. And *David* extremely lamented the loss of *Saul*, and more especially of his beloved friend *Jonathan*.

CHAPTER XV.

King D A V I D.

DAVID, besides being the bravest general, the finest poet, and the greatest musician that ever lived, had that glorious character peculiar to himself, of being the man after God's own heart, and being after the death of *Saul*, in consequence of God's preordination, created king of *Israel*, the first action he did, was to command the two *Benjamites*, who having cut off the head of *Ish-bobeth*, *Saul's* only remaining son,

brought it to him as a present, to have their hands and feet cut off, as a terror to all such ungrateful and bloody villains, their bodies also being hung up in some publick place ; nor was he unmindful of his dear departed friend *Jonathan*, but restored to his son *Mephibosheth*, a cripple, all his grandfather's estate, and ordered him a place at the table among his own children.

A conduct like this not only deserves, but may always

ways be sure of meeting with God's favour; in consequence of it therefore, *David* overcame all the people round about him, but in particular took the city of *Jerusalem*, afterwards so famous all over the world; and finding at last a peaceful season, he brought the ark which for fifty years and upwards, had continued at the house of one *Abinadab*, to his own city, singing and playing before it: and having consecrated several rich materials, which he took in his several wars, to God, he sat down, and began to regulate the government of his kingdom, as well as that of his own private family.

But let every one be cautious, and not only resist vice, but fly from it;

since even the virtuous *David*, the man after God's own heart, was surprized into such a succession of wicked actions, by one false step, as even the sincerest repentance could not compensate for, as to his state in this world. While his general *Joab* was carrying on the siege of *Rabbah*, *David* continued in *Jerusalem*, and walking one evening on the top of his house, he chanced to see a beautiful woman bathing herself in her garden; the unguarded king, as soon as he saw her, was smitten, and on enquiring, being told she was the wife of *Uriah* the *Hittite*, an officer in his army, *David* sent for her, lay with her, and dismissed her. But this was not all, in order to hide the shame of

G

one

one crime, he committed another still greater; he sent letters to *Joab*, wherein he commanded him to manage matters so, that *Uriah* might be killed, by the *Ammonites*, which was done accordingly; and *David* immediately after espoused his widow publicly. But though he by this means, concealed his wickedness from the world, God was neither to be so deceived, nor satisfied. He sent *Nathan* the prophet to *David* therefore, by an elegant parable, to represent the baseness and villainy of what he had done. *David* accordingly confesses his guilt, and begs pardon, which was granted, with regard to eternal punishment; but God not only destroyed the son, of which *Bath-sheba* was

soon afterwards delivered; but also told *David*, that several of his family should come to untimely ends, as well as some of his sons rise in rebellion against him. Nor was it long before this sentence began to be executed. For having a most beautiful daughter, whose name was *Tamar*; one of *David's* sons by a different mother, his eldest son *Ammon*, ravished her. For which brutal outrage, he was afterwards slain by another of *David's* sons called *Absalom*; who then rebelled against his father, forcing him to leave the royal city. All which *David* bore with admirable patience, and resignation to the will of God, as being conscious of his own guilt, in the case of *Uriah*; and of the di-

vine

vine justice in thus afflicting him.

Now *Abfalom* and his party entering *Jerusalem*, were received with the general acclamation of the people; yet was not the king without some friends there, who gave him constant intelligence, of whatever the rebels designed: by which means *David* escaped some of their snares. Till at length the unnatural son having gathered a numerous army, proposed to give his father battle, and both parties were drawn up in the field: but the war being waged against a son, for whom he had still a most tender affection, *David* removed to a neighbouring shelter, charging his generals for his sake, if they overcame and took *Abfalom*, to use him kindly.

But eternal justice, the never failing punisher of undutiful children, tho' it permitted *Abfalom* to be the scourge of *David's* fault, could not overlook his unnatural rebellion against his father; this wicked and abominable *Abfalom*, therefore was not only conquered (though his forces were much more numerous than the king's) but being entangled in the boughs of a tree, by his long hair, he there received the reward of his crimes, being run through the body; and instead of being buried like a prince, his carcase was thrown into a pit, and covered with a heap of stones.

However, the wickedness of the son did not prevent the father's grieving at his death, as it should

have done ; for we are told that *David* wept and mourned for many days ; but God having now given a temporal punishment for his crimes, began to take pity on his repentance, and *Solomon* being born, he promised that in him, *Israel* should have peace, and that he should build

him a temple, which *David* himself had thoughts of doing. And *David* being a very old man, grew so weak and feeble, that it was not possible by all the help of his physicians, to keep heat in him ; so having reigned forty years he died, leaving his kingdom to his son *Solomon*.

CHAPTER XVI.

King SOLOMON.

SOLOMON's character was that of being the wisest man, and undoubtedly had he not in his old age been drawn into vice by those about him, no king ever deserved that title so well ; for besides having the finest natural parts, which he proved by writing the book of Proverbs ; the Canticles or

Song of *Solomon* ; he also was master of the most piercing judgment, an instance of which he gave in a very extraordinary cause that came before him. Two harlots living together, had at the same time each of them a child ; now in the night time, one of the children dying, the harlot who was it's mother, laid

laid it in the place of the other woman's child, which was living, taking that, and in the morning claiming it as her's. Children were reckoned among the *Jews*, as the greatest blessing, (which they certainly are, if they be good) the harlot therefore would not be robbed of her infant, in that manner, but appealed to the king, who ordered the child to be divided betwixt them, and thus he discovered the true parent; she who stole the child, approving of the sentence, but she who had really brought it into the world, as we may naturally suppose, could not bear to see her babe butchered, rather chusing to give it up.

And *Solomon* builded a magnificent temple to God, being not only the glory of

Jerusalem, but one of the seven wonders of the world. In short, it's riches and beauty exceed all description: and his fame going far and near, the queen of *Sheba*, who reigned many thousand miles from him, hearing of *Solomon's* great wisdom, (which the great and good God had bestowed on him) came to prove him with hard questions; but confessing, that his glory and learning, surpassed every thing in this earth; she departed to her own dominions again, after having made *Solomon* many fine presents, and receiving from him in return, many equally magnificent.

Now *David* had appointed his son *Solomon*, preferable to his eldest son *Adonijah*, who perceiving
G 3 all

all his efforts to succeed his father, useless, gave way to his brother's good fortune; but meditating to strengthen his pretensions to the throne, he desired *Bathsheba*, the mother of king *Solomon*, to request the king to grant him to wife, *Abishag* the *Shunammite*, a beautiful damsel, who had cherished king *David*, and ministered unto him, and lay in his bosom, when he was old, that no heat could be kept in him. *Bathsheba* courteously undertook the message, not being aware of his design in it; and went to her son, the king, to request this favour of him. Nor was the respect *Solomon* paid his mother, any small sign of his wisdom; for as soon as she appeared, he dutifully rose up to

meet her; and causing her to be placed on the throne on his right-hand, he sat down by her, and promised to grant whatever she should desire of him: but when he heard her request, *he answered and said, and why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also—Then king Solomon swore by the Lord, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life! Now therefore, as the Lord liveth, Adonijah shall be put to death this day.* A most abominable oath, and one for which, no doubt among other things, his family was cursed afterwards. So he sent *Benaiah*, the son of *Jehoiadah*, who was his chief captain, and he fell upon

CHA
upon
him:
Abia
nijah
prief
of h
his
after
nai
liant
Dav
to fl
the
take
tuar
atta
the
mast
A
my
and
wisc
fors
of C
of f
of th
whi

upon *Adonijah*, and slew him: he after this removed *Abiathar*, a friend of *Adonijah's*, from being chief priest, putting *Zadok*, one of his own followers, into his place; and not long after, caused the same *Benaiah* to fall upon the valiant *Joab*, who had been *David's* chief general, and to slay him at the horns of the altar, which he had taken hold of for a sanctuary, he having also been attached to *Adonijah*, as the eldest son of his royal master.

And now to let you see, my dear child, how vain and inconsiderable a thing wisdom is, when once we forsake virtue, and the fear of God; I shall inform you of some other evil actions, of this otherwise great king, which drew the wrath of

God upon him and his whole family.

Solomon against the express commands of God, in the law of *Moses*, had married several wives from the neighbouring countries round about, who being all heathens and idolaters, took the advantage of his old age, to seduce him to their false worship, and he was wicked enough to bow before idols, unmindful of that only true power, which had done such wonders for his family. Now this so provoked the Almighty, that he raised him up several powerful enemies, and among the rest, *Jeroboam* the son of *Nebat*, who was a man of great valour, and one of his own officers. It happened on a time, that this person being clothed with a new

garment, and being gone out of *Jerusalem*, the prophet *Abijah* the *Skilonite* met him in the field, and taking hold of his new garment, he rent it in twelve pieces, giving ten of them to *Jeroboam*, and declaring to him, that after *Solemon's* death, the LORD would in like manner rend ten tribes from the hands of his son, and

give them to him, as a punishment for *Solomon's* sin of idolatry; and at the same time promising to establish *Jeroboam's* kingdom over *Israel*, if he walked in the way of the LORD. After this, *Jeroboam* fled into *Egypt*, to avoid the wrath of *Solomon*, who would have killed him, to frustrate *Abijah's* prophecy.

CHAPTER XVII.

King *REHOBAM*.

BUT *Solomon* being dead, his son *Rehoboam* was made king in his stead; and as soon as *Jeroboam* heard this, he came from *Egypt* to *Jerusalem*, and joining himself to the congregation of *Israel*, they petitioned the king for a redress of the

grievances, that had crept into the government, in the latter part of his father's reign; rendring their duty and service to him, if he would make their burdens lighter. Upon this, the king consulted with his old counsellors, who advised him to sooth their

their inflamed passions, and to promise them a redress of their grievances, in order to secure their faith and allegiance to him, at the beginning of his reign.

But this young prince, being vainly puffed up with his new dignity, would not condescend to soothe the passions of the people; but adhered to the advice of persons of his own age and inexperience, the companions and favourites of his youth, who persuaded him, that it was most becoming of the royal dignity, to threaten and terrify the people into their duty, rather than to appear to comply in the least with their petitions; being of the opinion of those court-flatterers, who would persuade young princes, to their ruin, that the

people were made for slaves to the prince, and born with saddles on their backs, and that a monarch had no more to do, but get up and ride: which advice many indiscreet princes, both before and since *Reboboam*, have so far pursued, 'till the oppressed people, being tired with their burdens, have risen as one man, and cast their unkingly rider: as proved to be the case with this misled prince.

For *Jeroboam*, and the elders of the people, attending the king at the appointed time, for an answer to their petitions, this rash prince, according to the advice of his young counsellors, answered them roughly, saying, *My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke:*

my father also chastised you with whips; but I will chastise you with scorpions. This answer enraging the people, they cried out, *what portion have we in David?* — *To your tents,* O Israel! *Now see to thine house,* David! And immediately departing, ten tribes fell off from the house of *David*, and chose *Jeroboam* for their king, according to the word of *Abijah* the prophet.

Thus *Rehoboam*, by his monstrous folly, in rather listening to the advice of boys, than his old and experienced counsellors, lost the most considerable part of his dominions. But what better could be expected, from what never ends in any good, obstinacy, and an opinion of one's

own judgment, in preference to those, who by their age and station are fitter to direct us. Nor was *Rehoboam's* stubbornness, attended with ill consequences to himself only, for the kingdom of *Israel* and *Judah*, ever after remained two distinct governments. God not permitting him to attempt the recovery of his loss, nay by his wickedness, he had like to have brought more trouble upon himself, from the *Egyptians*; had not God in his mercy, been pleased to accept of some condescensions, in consideration of which, he did not utterly destroy him. And *Rehoboam* having reigned fifteen years over the kingdom of *Judah*, died, leaving the throne to his son *Abijah*.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1. *The several changes in the kingdom of Israel, from king Jeroboam, to king Ahab.* 2. *The acts of the prophet Elijah.* 3. *The acts of the prophet Elisha, with the terrible punishment of the wicked children.* 4. *Jehu is made king, and Jezebel slain.*

1. **V**ARIOUS were the revolutions that afterwards followed in the kingdom of *Israel* which *Jeroboam* had founded: for he doing evil in the sight of the LORD, and erecting altars to two golden calves, which he set up to divert the people, for political reasons, from going to worship the LORD at *Jerusalem*, the LORD was pleased to cut off all his house and family, by the hand of *Baasha*; who also doing evil in the sight of the LORD, the LORD destroyed all his house and family, by the hand of *Zimri*; who burning himself to death,

to avoid the punishment due to his treason, *Omri* ascended the throne, and after a reign of twenty-two years, died, and was succeeded by his son *Ahab*, who was a greater idolater, and a wickedder man, than all that went before him: infomuch that the great prophet *Elijah*, prophesied against him, and assured him, that there should not be dew or rain in *Israel* for years to come, but according to his word.

2. *Elijah*, after this, by the command of the LORD, hid himself by the brook *Cherith*, and the LORD caused the ravens to bring him

him bread and flesh, both morning and evening. Afterwards, by the divine command, he went to a widow at *Zarephath*, whom he found gathering sticks, in order to make a fire to dress a little meal, which, with a cruise of oil, was all the sustenance she had for herself and son; as she told the prophet, when he desired a little bread and water at her hands: but *Elijah* commanded her, notwithstanding, to bring him a little cake; and promised her, that her barrel of meal, and cruise of oil, should not fail, 'till God sent rain upon earth: which was accordingly fulfilled; and they all three were sustained many days, by this small pittance, which the good widow, thought would hardly serve

for one meal, for herself and son. But thus we see her charity rewarded, and in the like manner, God will not fail to increase the stock of those, who are compassionate, and ready to help the needy.

The widow's son sickening after this, and dying, the LORD was pleased, at the supplication of the prophet, to restore him to life, to the great joy of the poor widow, who, before that, was inconsolable for his loss, and, in her agony of sorrow, imputed his death to the presence of *Elijah*. And in the third year after the great drought, the LORD commanded *Elijah* to go shew himself to *Abab*, promising to send rain upon the earth. *Abab*, in the mean while, had caused search to be made for

for *Elijah*, throughout *Israel*, to slay him, imputing to him the famine which then sorely raged in *Samaria*; and as soon as he saw the prophet, he sternly said, *Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.*

Elijah then, in order to convince *Ahab* of the folly of his idolatry, persuaded him to assemble the four hundred and fifty prophets of *Baal*, and cause them to offer a sacrifice to *Baal*, of a bullock, cut in pieces, and he would do the same to the LORD, and the God who should answer by fire from heaven on the sacrifice, should be acknow-

ledged the only true God. *Baal's* priests could not refuse the trial, and called upon *Baal* from morning 'till evening, in the most violent transports of superstitious zeal, to no purpose: and *Elijah*, in his turn, having caused a trench to be made, and twelve barrels of water to be poured on the wood, and on the sacrifice, 'till the trench was filled, he supplicated the ALMIGHTY to assert his power to the conviction of those idolaters: and in the sight of the king, and all the people, fire descended from heaven, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

And when all the people saw this, they fell on their faces,

faces, and they said, *The LORD be is the God! The LORD be is the God! And Elijah said unto them, take the prophets of Baal, let not one of them escape. And they took them, and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there. And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain: which accordingly came to pass.* This great prophet, having miraculously, by the assistance of God, performed these, and many other great things to the glory of the ALMIGHTY, and having appointed *Elisha* to succeed him as a prophet, according to the divine command, was at last taken up, in the presence of *Elisha*, by a chariot and horses of

fire, in a whirlwind to heaven.

3. And dropping his mantle from him, *Elisha* took it up, and with it divided the waters of *Jordan*, and passed over dry-shod, as he had seen *Elijah* do before. After which, as he was going by *Bethel*, we are told that some little children came out of the city mocking him; the dreadful consequence of which was, that God sent bears to eat them up. And some such curse we may depend upon it, will always attend those who jest at the aged or holy.

Now there came a certain woman unto *Elisha*, saying, *thy servant my husband is dead, and the creditor is come to take unto him, my two sons to be bond-men. And Elisha said unto her,*
what

what shall I do for thee?

—What hast thou in the house? And she said, thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. Then he commanded her to borrow a great number of vessels of her neighbours, and pour out into those vessels, 'till they were full; which she did, and found so great a quantity, that she sold a part of it, for as much as satisfied her debts, and there was enough left to subsist her and her children. Thus did this prophet, go about doing several good actions, but one in particular I shall mention, as a warning against meanness, and avarice.

Naaman the Syrian general, who was a man of great valour, but a leper, hearing of Elisha's miracles,

went, nobly attended, to his house, to seek a cure at his hands: whereupon Elisha sent him word by a servant, to wash seven times in Jordan, and he should be clean. Naaman, expecting to have seen Elisha himself, and that he should have been instantly cured by his prayers to God for him, went away in a great rage, saying, Are not the rivers of Damascus of greater virtue than the waters of Israel? But being persuaded to comply with the prophet's advice, he went down to Jordan, and dipped himself seven times; and his flesh came again, and he was clean: upon which he confessed, that there was no God in all the earth, but in Israel; and offered great presents to Elisha, who absolutely refused

refused them ; and smote with *Naaman's* leprosy his servant *Gebazi*, who clandestinely, in his master's name, obtained some presents for himself.

Now after this, the king of *Syria* made war against *Israel*, of which *Elisba* gave his country-men warning, so that they escaped his snares more than once, which incensed the *Syrian* monarch to such a degree, that finding to whom it was owing, and at the same time, that *Elisba* was then within his reach, at a city called *Dorban*; he sent a great army to besiege the place, and take him prisoner. But the prophet praying to God, to deliver him from the power of his enemies, the attendants about him, immediately saw an innu-

merable multitude of horsemen and chariots all of fire, which incompassed him about, and the *Syrians* were struck every man with blindness, in such a manner, that *Elisba* not only baffled their design, but led them out of their way into the midst of *Samaria*, so that they were in the hands of the *Israelites*; but when the king would have killed them, the generous prophet would by no means allow it, but preparing meat and drink for them, let them return to their master. An example well worthy imitation, since we should always treat those kindly, whom we have in our power. However the king of *Syria*, was far from paying this noble action in kind, since he after took the advantage of a famine,

to

to assault the *Israelites* again ; and he besieged the city, 'till the head of an ass through scarcity of provision, was sold for four-score pieces of silver. Besides that, people were driven to such extremity, that they even eat their own children ; which coming to the king of *Israel's* ears, and remembring that when he had the *Syrians* in his power, *Elisha* prevented his destroying them, he swore that his life should pay for the misfortune he had brought on his country. But *Elisha* was no way intimidated ; on the contrary, he told the king, that before that time the next day, flour should be so plenty in the city, as to be sold for a few pence by the bushel. But a lord on whose hand the

king leaned, derided this saying, to whom the prophet answered, *Thou shalt see it, but shalt not eat thereof* ; and all this came to pass : For God ALMIGHTY during the dusk of the evening, deceiving the *Syrians* by a noise which they imagined they heard, of a number of horsemen and chariots about their camp, they rose, and fled, leaving all their baggage, and provision behind them. And the *Israelites* afterwards rushing in great numbers out of the city gates, the unbelieving lord, was trod to death in the crowd.

4. And *Ahab* having been slain by the *Syrians*, the LORD caused *Elisha* to anoint *Jehu* for king of *Israel*, with a command to cut off all the house of

H

Ahab,

Abab. *Jehu* accordingly conspired against his master king *Joram*, the son of *Abab*; and having killed him, he entered *Israel* in triumph; and seeing the wicked *Jezebel*, *Abab's* wife, at the palace window, who reproached him for his conspiracy, he caused her to be thrown out of the window, and her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and the dogs afterwards eat her body, all but her skull, and the palms of her hands,

pursuant to the threatenings of the prophet, as a punishment for her wickedness, and the murder of one *Naboth*. After which, *Jehu* slew seventy of the sons of *Abab*, and all his relations and friends, and destroyed all the priests of *Baal*, having by a stratagem assembled them together; and by these acts of justice, had the kingdom assured to his posterity of the fourth generation.

CHAPTER XIX.

2. *The several changes in the kingdom of Judah, from the reign of king Abijah, to the reign of king Jeboam.* 2. *Ataliab.* 3. *The death of Jeboiada.* 4. *Amaziah, and his successors.* 5. *Hezekiah's good reign.*

1. **N**OW it was in the eighteenth year of *Jeroboam*, king of *Israel*; that *Abijah* the son of *Reboam*, began to reign o-

ver the kingdom of *Judah*; and while he acted towards God and man, with righteousness and justice, he flourished exceedingly, bas-

fling

king and getting the better of all his enemies; but turning to the errors of his father, he died, and was succeeded by *Assa*.

This *Assa* was a good prince, destroying all the idols, which *Abijah* his father had caused to be raised; and he restored his people to the true worship, degrading even his own mother for her obstinacy, in still persisting to pray to those graven images; he too was very successful in every thing he undertook, 'till being seized with a disorder in his feet, he died, as it should seem, through his own folly, in rather having recourse to the advice of physicians, than the immediate hand of God (who in those days might be directly applied to), and he was bu-

ried in the sepulchre of the kings of *Israel*.

And now *Jehoshaphat* ascended the throne, in every respect a most excellent governour; being for courage, wisdom and piety, but little inferior to *David* himself. This prince overthrew the *Ammonites*, and the *Moabites*, who made war against him; but afterwards, unfortunately forming an alliance with a wicked prince, of the *Israelites*, by which he displeased God, he was cut off in the flower of his age, and his son *Jehoram* was declared his successor.

This was one of the worst kings that ever reigned in *Judah*, for though he lived but eight years after his accession, he contrived to commit all the crimes of his fore-fathers,

and *Elijah* prophesied against *Jehoram*, that God for his wickedness, should strike him with some dreadful disease; however, he went on in his evil course, 'till his bowels rushing out of his belly, he died, after having seen his sons butchered before his face, and all his wealth taken away, by the incursions of the neighbouring nations. Neither did the Jews so much as mourn for him, or suffer his body to be buried in the tombs of their former kings.

2. *Abaziah* was the next prince that assumed the scepter, being the only remaining son of *Jehoram*. Happy would it have been for him, had he taken warning by the dreadful fall of his father, but instead of that, he was so monstrously corrupt, that God

suffered him to reign but one year, he being slain in a battle against the *Israelites*, when *Athaliah*, his mother, a most wicked and abandoned woman, seizing that opportunity to gain the government for herself, rose up in the city of *Jerusalem*, and murdered every one of the royal family, excepting only her little grandson, *Joash*; who was miraculously preserved by his great aunt, the wife of *Jehoiada* the priest, and by them concealed in the temple no less than six years; 'till having got a sufficient party over to the royal interest, they ventured to disclose the young monarch, and the idolatrous and unnatural *Athaliah*, being slain, *Joash* was established king over the *Jewish* nation.

3. *Joash*

3. *Joash* was but a child, being only seven years old, when he ascended the throne; however, his want of experience was sufficiently remedied, by the wisdom of *Jehoiada*, whose counsel he continued to follow for many years, after he was grown up; repairing the temple which *Athaliah*, and her faction, had greatly damaged, and doing several other works of religion and justice; but that valuable priest dying at length through age, *Joash* soon began to forget his pious lessons, turning from the ways of truth, to bow before idols in groves and high places, which was a most abominable practice; the devil taking those opportunities, to make unfortunate and blinded people pray to him; on this

account then, God assisted the *Syrians*, who with a meer handful of troops, overcame *Judah*; and the ungrateful *Joash*, having ordered *Zachariah*, the son of his old friend and preserver, to be stoned to death, only for giving him good advice, he was himself in the end conspired against, and for that very fact, was murdered in his bed; leaving his son *Amaziah*, to govern the people in his room.

4. While men continue virtuous, they are almost always successful; and this was the case of *Amaziah*, a prince, who, for a long series of years, went on in performing good and great actions, blessing his people, and punishing their enemies: 'till turning aside, like so many others of his

ancestors, he also became the object of God's wrath, being slain in a battle; nor was *Uzziah* his son attended with a better fate; for after having exercised the regal power for a short season, he died, of that shocking and loathsome disease, called leprosy, being succeeded in the kingdom by *Jotham*, a man who though he neither entered the temple, nor restrained the people as he should have done, yet was nevertheless, on the account of his other virtues greatly favoured by the divine power.

Abaz was the next monarch who wore the crown of *Judah*; but he in no sort followed the steps of his predecessor, the son being as profligate in every respect, as the father was

virtuous. He seems indeed to have exercised his authority, only to make his people sin, by which means he brought many disasters upon himself and them; *Judah* being not only spoiled in his reign, by the king of *Syria*, but a great number of the people were also carried into captivity, by the *Israelites*, by whom they were afterwards let go, however, on account of their near relation ship. Nor did all those misfortunes, in the least, change the heart of the hardened *Jotham*, who went on 'till his death, in an uninterrupted course of vile actions, 'till God, in pity to the poor *Jews*, took him away, and substituted the virtuous *Hezekiah* in his stead.

5. Now

5. Now the kingdom of *Judah* once more began to flourish. The true worship, so long abolished, was quickly restored, and every thing under *Hezekiah* wore a chearful and holy face; when *Sennacherib* king of *Syria*, came against him with a numerous army. Nor was *Hezekiah* backward in preparing to oppose him, but chiefly trusted in the hand of God, which he assured the people would preserve them. Nor were they slow to believe this, in spite of several dissuasive and threatening messages, sent to them by king *Sennacherib*. So the great prophet *Isaiah* and the king praying to God in the night-time, he sent

an angel, totally to overthrow the *Assyrian* army, which was obliged to return from whence it came, with disgrace and losses. And *Hezekiah* grew great in riches and honour, being for grandeur and magnificence, another *Solomon* in *Jerusalem*. Neither was he oppressed by God during his whole life-time, though he once offended him in the time of a fit of sickness. And *Hezekiah* died, being buried in the chief sepulchre, or tomb, belonging to the family of *David*. And all *Judah*, and the inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, mourned for him. while *Manasseh* his son reigned in his stead.

CHAPTER XX.

Containing the joint history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, to their captivity, with the rebuilding of the temple, and the return of the people from Babylon.

HISTORY informs us of no nation, that ever experienced such frequent and visible marks of God's favour and protection, as the *Jewish*; nor have we indeed any instance of a nation, which so sensibly felt the marks of his resentment: nor was this more than strict justice, since when they went astray, they had neither ignorance, nor evil custom, nor, in short, any thing to plead in their own excuse: yet did not God take an advantage of their wickedness, to crush them all at once; on the contrary, he gave them such frequent warnings, that if

they had not been as it were blinded by their sins, they might easily have shunned destruction; but though they saw their nation divided, though they saw their kings and people daily fall sacrifices to their own unrighteousness, they still continued to go on from one degree of wickedness to another; 'till the evil which had been so frequently denounced against them came; and as the *Israelites* of the two, were rather greater offenders, than the people of *Judah*, God in his justice, began with punishing them.

It

It was accordingly in the seventh year of *Hosea*, king of *Israel*; that *Shalmanezzer*, king of *Affyria*, came with a powerful army, and besieged the capital city of *Samaria*. As God had already determined to deliver it into his hands, we may easily imagine, that any opposition made by the people was in vain; notwithstanding which, he permitted them to defend themselves for three years, at the end of which term, *Shalmanezzer* prevailed, and he carried away all the inhabitants of *Samaria*, captives; dispersing them about in the different cities of his dominions.

Nor would the fate of *Judah* have been long delayed, for the successors of the worthy prince *Heze-*

kiab, whom you have already heard of, were abominably wicked and idolatrous, had it not been for the excellent *Josiah*, another king of that country, who was a pious prince, remarkably virtuous in every respect, and gained the esteem and favour of God, so as to stop his hand for some years; 'till being taken off in a battle, which through an over-abundant courage he had engaged in, and those who reigned after him, being equally criminal with any of their forefathers, God no longer forbore to strike.

It was accordingly in the wicked reign of *Zedekiah*, that *Nebuchadnezzar* king of *Babylon*, came up against the city of *Jerusalem*, which he burnt down to the ground, with the glorious

glorious temple of *Solomon*, which was built therein, and putting out the king's eyes, he made slaves of every man, woman, and child, which had not perished by the flames or the sword.

And fourscore years did the children of *Israel*, remain under the *Babylonish* captivity, mourning and suffering for their crimes; 'till *Cyrus the great* ascending the throne, their return at that period, which was foretold by the prophet *Jeremiah*, came to pass.

For *Cyrus* was not only a great, but a good man, and having received great

favours from the hand of God, he thought it was his duty to rebuild his temple, which by a vision he learned to be situated in *Jerusalem*, as in his best beloved city.

So king *Cyrus* sent a number of the *Hebrews* into their native country, with all the necessary materials for the work; which being compleated in a few years after, another monarch being seated on the *Persian* throne, the *Jewish* people returned from their slavery, and once more settled themselves, in the *Land of Promise*.

CHAPTER XXI.

The history of queen Esther.

THERE is nothing I would so earnestly recommend to all my little female readers, next to that attention, which they should pay to those parts of holy scripture more immediately relative to the subject of religion, than a frequent perusal of the delightful history of *Esther*.

Ahasuerus, one of the most powerful monarchs of the east, having put away *Vashti* his queen, for her proud and contemptuous behaviour; this *Jewish* virgin was raised to his bed and throne, by the excellence of her beauty; but she preserved her station there, by her humility, gratitude, and discretion.

For *Mordecai* her father's nephew, being a captive taken at the time of the *Babylonish* invasion, lived in the royal palace: now this *Mordecai* had not only been the instrument of preferring *Esther*, but after the death of her father and mother, bred her up as his own child. The queen therefore was grateful for this; and though her kinsman was become her inferior, she still continued to treat him with the utmost respect and deference.

Mordecai's station, was that of *sitting in the king's gate*: and it so happened, that he had one time the good fortune to get the know-

knowledge of a conspiracy that was hatching against the life of *Abasuerus*; this he discovered, and the traitors were hanged: however, *Mordecai's* loyalty remained unrewarded, 'till *Haman*, a proud and imperious man, who had greatly risen in the king's favour, upon some disrespect, which he imagined this *Jewish* slave shewed his person, determined not only to make away with him, but, for his sake, to destroy all that unhappy nation, of which there were great numbers scattered up and down in the several provinces. And he accordingly obtained the king's mandate, for putting this bloody purpose into execution.

This, as we may imagine, threw the poor *Jews* into

the utmost consternation. But as for *Mordecai*, who knew from whence the evil sprung, he abandoned himself to the most extreme sorrow; nor could queen *Esther* by any means comfort him, 'till hearing the cause of his distress, she herself became a partner in it.

And there was now, a very little time, 'till the final stroke was to be struck, when the queen, by *Mordecai's* direction, threw herself at the king's feet, intreating, that he with his favourite *Haman*, would honour her with their presence at a banquet. And the king, in consequence of her invitation, being come, he demanded what favour she would require, but she said all her desire, was, that he and *Haman*, would

would visit her again the next day.

A mark of distinction like this, set that proud man, almost beside himself; but *Mordecai*, still was a bar to his happiness; and as he could not bear the sight of him, he thought he might now venture to take him off, without any further ceremony; so he caused a gallows to be raised, on which he resolved to hang him, as soon as he returned from the queen's next banquet, had not God given a turn to affairs, and caused the wicked *Haman* to perish by that very instrument, which he prepared for the destruction of the innocent.

King *Abasuerus*, being restless in the night time, ordered the chronicle of his kingdom to be brought,

and read to him; now it so fell out, that in this very book, *Mordecai's* discovery of the treason before-mentioned, was set down; and *Abasuerus* asking what reward he had received, was answered none; upon which calling *Haman*, he demanded, *What should be done unto the man, whom the king delighted to honour.* The favourite thinking that person could only be himself, replied, that he should be dressed in the royal robes, crowned with the imperial diadem, and led thro' the street on the king's own horse: then said *Abasuerus*, make haste and do all this to *Mordecai*. So *Haman* burnt with envy and vexation, while *Mordecai* triumphed in the face of the whole kingdom.

But

But this was not the only punishment which *Haman* was to receive for his villainy; for queen *Ester* afterwards at the banquet, laying his wicked scheme open to the king, he was punished by death; and for a greater example, was hanged upon the gallows which he had designed for *Mordecai*. And the king took the ring from his finger, and gave it to *Mor-*

decai, who was advanced to his enemy's post, obtaining several privileges for his enslaved countrymen. And after this, *Ester* lived a long and happy life, being a fit pattern for all her sex, who shall be raised to any extraordinary station, to shew them that grandeur is nothing without modesty; or beauty without virtue.

CHAPTER XXII.

The history of Job.

AMONG all the books written by *Moses*, there is none more justly admired, than that of *Job*, which contains such a rare example of patience, and dependance on the will of God, as calls for all peoples imitation.

Job was a man of the land of *Uz*, and for riches, happiness, and virtue, there was none like him to be found any where. For he had eleven thousand head of different sorts of cattle; he had ten children; and God held him in particu-
lar

lar esteem. Now the host of heaven, at a stated season appearing before the throne of GOD ALMIGHTY, the devil had the presumption to thrust himself in among them. And GOD pointed out *Job* to him, as a perfect and upright man, whom he could not pervert by all his temptation. But the devil said, 'is *Job* good for nought, ' have you not blest him ' with every thing, he ' well may serve you; but ' take away his substance, ' and instead of blessing ' him, afflict him, and he ' shall curse you to your ' face.' So GOD gave Satan power to try *Job*, and the first thing this evil-spirit undertook, was to deprive him of all his cattle, which he did, by setting the *Sabeans* to kill his oxen,

and by sending fire from the clouds, he consumed his sheep and servants; he afterwards brought the *Chaldeans*, who took his camels and asses; and at last he blew down a house where his sons and daughters were feasting, and they were all buried under the ruins. But to all this, *Job* only answered, *naked I came out of my mother's womb, and naked I shall return thither, the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.*

So the devil appeared before GOD a second time, and GOD again pointed out *Job* as a good man, who still held fast his integrity; but the devil cried, 'A man's life is precious, ' and while that is safe, ' he values not any thing, but

‘ but put forth your hand
 ‘ now and afflict *Job’s* bo-
 ‘ dy ; he shall curse you
 ‘ to your face.’ Then
 God gave the devil power
 to try *Job* farther. And
 this hellish agent smote
Job with sore boils, from
 the crown of his head, to
 the sole of his foot ; *Job*
 then set down in the ashes,
 when his wife, enraged, bid
 him *curse God and die* ; but
 he replied, *thou speakest like*
a foolish woman ; shall we
receive good at the hand of
God, and shall we not re-
ceive evil. But all this
 while *Job* sinned not, only
 mourning with his friends,
 who hearing of his unfor-
 tunate change of life, came
 to visit him.

Now their several excel-
 lent discourses, the most
 divine that ever were pen-
 ned, are noted at large in

the Bible ; but as in this
 place, I only pretend to
 give the history of a man
 so renowned for his pa-
 tience ; I shall add nothing
 farther here, than that af-
 ter, as the severest trial of
 his virtue, he had been re-
 duced to the utmost pitch
 of human misery, in which
 he still retained his faith in
 God’s mercy, and his de-
 pendence and submission
 to his divine will, he was,
 by the gracious Creator,
 reinstated in all his former
 possessions ; nay he was
 made more rich and power-
 ful in every respect, than e-
 ver he was before ; and after
 enjoying all worldly hap-
 piness, for a great number
 of years, he at last died,
 leaving behind him a nu-
 merous family, which he
 saw even to the fourth ge-
 neration.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The history of Daniel.

DANIEL was a great prophet, during the time of the *Jewish* captivity; the most remarkable parts of his life and actions, I shall therefore set down, as I find them written in that book of the holy scriptures, which is distinguished by his name.

Nebuchadnezzar king of *Babylon*, having selected a few particular young men of the *Jewish* nation, to be educated for his service, among those was *Daniel*; and the king ordered that they should be fed with costly meats and rich wines, so as to look fair and chearful in his presence; but *Daniel* and three of his companions, would not de-

file themselves with such heathenish luxury, they therefore besought their governor, that he would suffer them rather to feed on pulse and water, and he through much intreaty consenting, when they came before the king, notwithstanding their poor diet, they looked better than any of the other *Hebrews*, who had feasted upon so many delicacies.

Such was GOD's bounty to those wise children, who were not besotted to their bellies, or greedy of good things, as they are very wrongfully called, than which a more wicked and beastly vice cannot be; besides that, it
I fills

fills us with ill humours, both of body and mind, rendering us odious to God and man.

Now king *Nebuchadnezzar* had a dream, which left a dread upon his mind, but the substance and matter of it he had forgot: so he called all his magicians and wise men together, (people who pretended to interpret those things) commanding them to tell him what his dream was, and the signification of it; but they confessed their inability to do any such thing, if his majesty would tell them his dream, they said they would interpret it; this enraged the king, he therefore sent out his guards to kill and destroy all the magicians in *Babylon*, which would have been instantly executed, had not *Daniel*

interposed, and praying to God, who in the night-time, discovered the king's dream to him, he presented himself before *Nebuchadnezzar*, giving a full account, and interpretation of it; which was so satisfactory, that the king raised *Daniel* to be as great as his three friends, *Shadrach*, *Mesbach*, and *Abed-nego*; who were rulers over provinces.

But who would depend upon the favour of a wicked prince; some time after this, *Nebuchadnezzar* erected a golden image, which he commanded all the people at a certain sound of instruments, to fall down and worship.

Shadrach, *Mesbach*, and *Abed-nego*, only refused, which being carried to the king's ears, he ordered them

to be cast into a burning fiery furnace, bound together; and these three men were taken; however, they told the king, they feared him not, for God would deliver them out of his hands. He then commanded in a passion, that the furnace, should be heated seven times hotter than at other times, and that it should be encompassed with the choicest of his troops, which were all consumed by a violent eruption of the flames. So *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego*, were thrown into the fire, bound together; and as it should seem *Nebuchadnezzar* himself was by, for starting up, he cried immediately after, that he saw three men walking in the midst of the furnace, with a fourth like an angel, along

with them; then he came near, and called, *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego*, ye servants of the most high God, come forth. And the three *Jews*, came forth before all the people; nor was a hair of their head singed, or even so much as a smell of the fire upon their cloaths. Upon this the king turned to the only true and powerful God, and he exalted the men, whom God had so miraculously preserved, to a very high station. Notwithstanding, he afterwards left his ways, 'till being made sensible by a severe malady, the loss of his senses, in which he eat grass like an ox; he repented again, and died a just and pious prince.

Now he was succeeded by *Belshazzar*, who being

at a feast once with his wives and princes, had the impiety, to order the vessels belonging to the temple of *Jerusalem*, which had been taken from thence by *Nebuchadnezzar*, to be brought for them to drink out of; but while he was perpetrating this wicked fact, he was struck with a dreadful apparition of a hand, which appeared over against him, writing something on the wall, the words none of his counsellors could interpret, but *Daniel* told him the meaning of them was, that he should lose his kingdom, which that very night came

to pass; for *Belshazzar* was slain, and *Darius* king of the *Medes* and *Persians*, seized on his throne. And this king was pleased highly to favour *Daniel*, 'till he having incurred his displeasure, by praying to God, the king cast him into a lion's den, where he remained a whole night, to the great inward disquiet of *Darius*, who went the next morning, and there miraculously found him alive; so he honoured *Daniel*, who for many years lived the leading man of the kingdom; even to the reign of *Cyrus the Great*.

End of the Old Testament.



A New

VII.

zar
ing
ans,
And
gh-
l he
dif-
to
him
e he
ght,
dif-
vent
and
und
ared
any
ling
ven
the



New

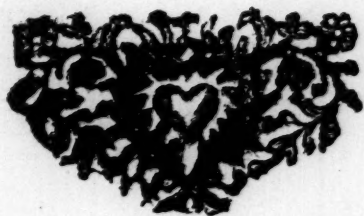


N

D

Out of the Mouths of Babes & Sucklings thou has perfected Pra

A
NEW MANUAL
OF
DEVOTIONS
FOR
CHILDREN.



L O N D O N:
Printed in the Year 1759.



◆◆◆

Ne

◆◆◆

W

vin
so,
right
imp
l
only
thin
ref
a j
I

A,
New MANUAL OF DEVOTIONS
F O R
CHILDREN.

Introductory Meditation.

WHEN in my serious thoughts, I begin to look into myself, and consider what I am, I am presently convinced, that I am a reasonable creature: for was I not so, it would be impossible for me not only to judge between right and wrong, things fit and unfit, but it would be impossible for me even to think at all.

Now seeing that I can do all this; seeing that I cannot only meditate on what is present, but revolve in my mind things long past, that is to say, seeing, that I have not only reflection, but memory; besides, that I am enabled to form a judgment in some sort of things, yet to come, I am sure I must have a soul within this fleshly body of mine, and

that of a nature infinitely superiour to what the beasts are endued with, who move indeed, and act, as well as give some feint marks of understanding in a few particular circumstances, but attempt to try them ever so little further, they are as absolutely irrational as wood, or stone, shewing an utter incapacity either of looking into themselves, or of forming ideas from the objects about them. So that it is plain, their soul must be entirely dependent on their bodies, and of one piece with them, whereas my soul is evidently a distinct part, being perfect, and powerful of itself, without any other assistance.

And indeed, was there no other argument in the world, to convince me of the spiritual nature of my soul, this alone would do it, that I can in my own imagination, mount in a moment from earth to heaven; fly from one corner of the world to the other; and then with a thought, return to myself again: yet was I to attempt to do this with my body, I should find it impracticable.

But what is this soul of mine which is so nimble in it's motion? Why it is the spirit, which gives life, sense, and motion to all the members of my body, it is that, which enables my eyes to see; my ears to hear; my hands to feel; and my feet to walk; and this I can make no doubt of, because I see when the body is once deprived of the soul, that it loses all power to perform these things, being dead, and no more able to see, hear, feel, or stir, than a marble statue. Besides when I am about to perform any action, do I not
first

first design it in my mind; can I read or write, without thinking at the same time of what I am about? Certainly I cannot, which shews me, that, properly speaking, my soul, is myself; and this body only a necessary case for it to act in, during it's stay in this world; which being corrupted and turned to it's original dust, my soul, which is a pure spiritual substance, infused into me by God, shall return from whence it came, to continue for ever, either in a state of happiness or misery, in another life.

How much then, does it concern me seriously to bethink myself, where I had best to lead this everlasting life, in the heavenly mansions of eternal glory, or in the dreadful dungeon of hell. Betwixt these there is no comparison, and therefore, I shall not put it to the question, which place to chuse to live in. But without giving the other that honour, to dispute the preference with it; I this morning, with the leave of the most high God, do chuse the kingdom of heaven, to be the lot of my inheritance, the only seal of bliss and glory, for my soul, to rest and dwell in, to all eternity.

But heaven, they say, is a place hard to come at; what therefore must I do? Why, I must either resolve to make it my whole business to get to heaven, or else I must never expect to go there. I resolve then, in the presence of Almighty God, that from this day forward, I will make it my whole business here upon earth, to look after my happiness in heaven; and to walk circumspectly in those blessed paths,

which God hath appointed all to walk in, that ever hope to come to him.

Now there are in this affair, two things especially necessary, faith and obedience, or, in other words, to believe, and live right. So that it as much behoves me, to have my faith in the fundamentals of religion rightly confirmed, as to have my obedience exactly conformable to the law of God. The first thing therefore, that by the grace of God I am resolved to do, is to see my faith, that it be both rightly placed and fixed firmly; so that I may be thoroughly settled in the judgment and knowledge of those points, my agreement to which, is absolutely necessary for my future salvation. Let therefore what times soever come upon me; let what temptations soever be thrown in my way, I am determined, by the grace of God, stedfastly to believe as followeth.



THE
PRINCIPLES
OF THE
Christian Religion.

Question.

WHAT sure ground
have we to build our
religion upon?

Answer. The word of
God, contained in the
scriptures.

*Q. What is the first point
of religion, you are to learn
out of God's word?*

A. The nature of God.

Q. What is God.

*A. God is a Spirit, most
perfect, most wise, Al-
mighty and most holy.*

*Q. What mean you by
calling God a Spirit?*

*A. That God hath no
body at all, and therefore
must not be thought to be
like unto any thing, which
may be seen by the eye of
man.*

*Q. Are there any more
Gods than one?*

*A. No: there is only
one God: though in that
one Godhead, there be
three persons.*

*Q. Which is the first of
these persons?*

A. The

122 *The Principles of the Christian Religion.*

A. The Father, who begetteth the Son.

Q. Which is the second?

A. The Son, begotten of the Father.

Q. Which is the third?

A. The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son.

Q. Which are the principal creatures?

A. Angels and men.

Q. What is the nature of angels?

A. They are wholly spiritual, having no body at all.

Q. What is the nature of Man?

A. Man consisteth of two diverse parts; a body and a soul.

Q. What is the body?

A. The outward and earthly part of man; made at the beginning of the dust of the earth.

Q. What is the soul?

A. The inward and spiritual part of man; which is immortal, and never can die.

Q. How did God make man at the beginning?

A. According to his own likeness and image.

Q. Wherein was the image of God principally seen?

A. In the perfection of the understanding; and the freedom and holiness of the will.

Q. How many of mankind were created at the beginning?

A. Two; *Adam* the man, and *Eve* the woman: from both whom, all mankind did afterward proceed.

Q. What befel unto the Angels after their creation?

A. Some continued in that holy estate wherein they

they were created, some of them fell, and became devils.

Q. May the good Angels fall hereafter?

A. No: but they shall always continue in their holiness and happiness.

Q. Shall the wicked Angels ever recover their first estate?

A. They shall not: but be tormented in hell world without end.

Q. How did God deal with man, after he made him?

A. He made a covenant or agreement with Adam, and in him with all mankind.

Q. What was man bound to do by this covenant?

A. To continue as holy, as God at the first made him; to keep all God's commandments, and ne-

ver to break any of them.

Q. What did God promise unto man, if he did thus keep his commandments?

A. The continuance of his favour and everlasting life.

Q. What did God threaten unto man, if he did sin and break his commandments?

A. His dreadful curse, and everlasting death.

Q. Did man continue in that obedience which he did owe unto God?

A. No. For Adam and Eve, obeying rather the persuasion of the devil, than the commandment of God, did eat of the forbidden fruit, and so fell away from God.

Q. Was this the sin of Adam and Eve alone; or are we also guilty of the same?

A. All

124 *The Principles of the Christian Religion.*

A. All we, that are their children, are guilty of the same sin: for we all sinned in them.

Q. *What are the fruits that proceed from this natural corruption?*

A. Actual sins: whereby we break the commandments of God in the whole course of our life.

Q. *How do we thus break God's commandments?*

A. In thought, word, and deed: not doing that which we ought to do, and doing that which we ought not to do.

Q. *What punishment is mankind subject unto, by reason of original and actual sin?*

A. He is subject to all the plagues of God in this life; and endless torments in hell after this life.

Q. *Did God leave man in this woful estate?*

A. No: but of his free and unreserved mercy, entered into a new covenant with mankind.

Q. *What is offered unto man in this new covenant?*

A. Grace and life everlasting, is freely offered by God, unto all that shall be made partakers of his Son *Jesus Christ*; who alone is mediator betwixt God and man.

Q. *What are you to consider in Christ the mediator of this covenant?*

A. Two things: his nature, and his office.

Q. *How many natures be there in Christ?*

A. Two: the Godhead, and the manhood, joined together in one person; which is no other but the second

second person of the Trinity.

Q. What is the office of Christ?

A. To be a mediator betwixt God and Man.

Q. What was required of Christ for making peace and reconciliation betwixt God and Man?

A. That he should satisfy the first covenant whereunto man was tied.

Q. Wherein was Christ to make satisfaction to the first covenant?

A. In performing that righteousness which the law of God did require of man: and in bearing the punishment which was due unto man, for breaking of the same law.

Q. How did Christ perform that righteousness, which God's law requireth of man?

A. In that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, without all spot of original corruption; and lived most holy all the days of his life, without all actual sin.

Q. How did he bear the punishment, which was due unto man, for breaking God's law?

A. In that he willingly for man's sake, made himself subject to the curse of the law, both in body and soul: and humbling himself even unto the death, offered up unto his Father, a perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world.

Q. What is required of man, for obtaining the benefits of the gospel?

A. That he receive Christ Jesus, whom God doth freely offer unto him.

Q. By

126 *The Principles of the Christian Religion.*

Q. By what means are you to receive Christ?

A. By faith, whereby I believe the gracious promises of the gospel.

Q. What is the first main benefit which we do get by thus receiving Christ?

A. Justification, whereby, in Christ we receive the forgiveness of our sins, and are accounted righteous: being by that means, freed from the guilt of sin and condemnation, and estated in a new interest, unto everlasting life.

Q. What is repentance?

A. Repentance is a gift of God, whereby a godly sorrow is wrought in the heart of the faithful, for offending God their merciful father, by their former transgressions; together with a resolution for the time to come, to for-

sake their former courses, and to lead a new life.

Q. What are the chief parts of God's law?

A. That we love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind.

Q. How many commandments belong to this table?

A. Four.

Q. Which is the first commandment?

A. I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no others gods before me.

Q. What duty is enjoined in this commandment?

A. That in all the inward powers and faculties of our souls, the true eternal God be entertained, and he only.

Q. Which

Q. Which is the second commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

Q. What duty is enjoined in this commandment ?

A. That all outward means of religious and solemn worship be given unto the same God alone ; and not so much as the least degree thereof (even the bowing of the body) be communicated to any image or representation either of God, or of any thing else whatsoever.

Q. Which is the third commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain : for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain.

Q. What is enjoined in this commandment ?

A. That in the ordinary course of our lives, we use the name of God, (that is, his titles, words, works, judgments, and whatsoever he would have himself known by) with reverence and all holy respect ; that in all things he may have his due glory given unto him.

Q. Which is the fourth commandment ?

A. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy, &c.

Q. What doth this commandment require ?

A. That we keep holy the sabbath-day ; by resting from the ordinary businesses of this life, and bestowing that leisure upon the exercises of religion, both publick and private.

Q. What is the sum of the second part of God's law ?

A. That

128 *The Principles of the Christian Religion.*

A. That we love our neighbours as ourselves.

Q. What commandments belong to this table?

A. The six last.

Q. Which is the fifth commandment?

A. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Q. What kind of duties are prescribed in this commandment, which is the first of the second table?

A. Such duties as are to be performed with a special respect of superiors, inferiors, and equals: as namely, reverence to all superiors, obedience to such of them as are in authority; and whatsoever special duties concern the husband and wife, parents and children, masters and ser-

vants, magistrate and people, pastors and flock, and such like.

Q. Which is the sixth commandment?

A. Thou shalt not kill.

Q. What doth this commandment enjoin?

A. The preservation of the safety of mens persons, with all means tending to the same.

Q. Which is the seventh commandment?

A. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Q. What is required in this commandment?

A. The preservation of the chastity of mens persons: for the keeping whereof, wedlock is commanded unto them that stand in need thereof.

Q. Which is the eighth commandment?

A. Thou shalt not steal.

Q. What

Q. What things are ordered in this commandment?

A. Whatsoever concerneth the goods of this life; in regard either of ourselves, or of our neighbours.

Q. How in regard of ourselves?

A. That we labour diligently in an honest and profitable calling; content ourselves with the goods well gotten, and with liberality employ them to good uses.

Q. How in regard of our neighbours?

A. That we use just dealing unto them in this respect, and use all good means that may tend to the furtherance of their estate.

Q. Which is the ninth commandment?

A. Thou shalt not bear

false witness against thy neighbour.

Q. What doth this commandment require?

A. The using of truth in our dealing one with another; especially to the preservation of the good name of our neighbours.

Q. Which is the tenth and last commandment?

A. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbours house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbours wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbours.

Q. What doth this commandment contain?

A. It condemneth all wandering thoughts, that disagree from the love which we owe unto our neighbours; although we never yield consent thereunto.

K *Q. What*

130 *The Principles of the Christian Religion.*

Q. What means doth God use to offer the benefits of the gospel unto men, and to work and increase his graces in them?

A. The outward ministry of the gospel.

Q. Where is this ministry executed?

A. In the visible churches of Christ.

Q. What do you call a visible church?

A. A company of men that live under the outward means of salvation.

Q. What are the principal parts of this ministry?

A. The administration of the word and sacraments.

Q. What is the word?

A. That part of the outward ministry, which consisteth in the delivery of doctrine.

Q. What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is a visible sign, ordained by

God to be a seal for confirmation of the promises of the gospel unto the due receivers thereof.

Q. Which are the sacraments ordained by Christ in the new Testament?

A. Baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. What is baptism?

A. The sacrament of our admission into the Church; sealing unto us our new birth, by the communion which we have with Christ Jesus.

Q. What doth the element of water in baptism represent unto us?

A. The blood and spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Q. What doth the cleansing of the body represent.

A. The cleansing of the soul by the forgiveness of sins and imputation of righteousness.

Q. What

The Principles of the Christian Religion. 131

Q. What doth the being under the water, and the freeing from it again, represent?

A. Our dying unto sin, by the force of Christ's death; and living again unto righteousness, through his resurrection.

Q. What is the Lord's Supper?

A. The sacrament of our preservation in the Church; sealing unto us our spiritual nourishment and continual increase in Christ.

Q. What do the elements of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, represent unto us?

A. The body and blood of Christ.

Q. What doth the breaking of the bread, and pouring out the wine represent?

A. The sufferings whereby our Saviour was broken for our iniquities; the shedding of his precious blood, and pouring out of his soul unto death.

Q. What doth the receiving of the bread and wine represent?

A. The receiving of Christ by faith.

Q. After the course of this life is ended; what shall be the state of man in the world to come?

A. Every one is to be judged, and rewarded according to the life which he hath led.

Q. What is the state of the soul of man, as soon as he departeth out of this life?

A. The souls of God's children are presently received into heaven, there to enjoy unspeakable com-

132 *The Principles of the Christian Religion.*

forts: the souls of the wicked are sent into hell, there to endure endless torments.

Q. What call you the general judgment?

A. That which Christ shall in a solemn manner, give upon all men at once; when he shall come at the last day with the glory of his Father, and all men, that ever have been from the beginning of the world until that day, shall appear together before him, both in body and soul, whether they be *quick* or *dead*.

Q. How shall the dead appear before the judgment-seat of Christ?

A. The bodies which they had in their life-time, shall, by the almighty power of God, be restored

again, and quickened with their souls: and so there shall be a general resurrection from the dead.

Q. How shall the quick appear?

A. Such as then remain alive, shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye; which shall be to them instead of death.

Q. What sentence shall Christ pronounce upon the righteous?

A. Come ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Q. What sentence shall he pronounce upon the wicked?

A. Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire; which is prepared for the devil and his angels.

An H Y M N.

HOW glorious is our heavenly King,
 Who reigns above the sky!
 How shall a child presume to sing,
 His dreadful Majesty?

II.

How great his Power is none can tell,
 Nor think how large his Grace;
 Nor man below, nor saints that dwell,
 On high before his face.

III.

Not angels that stand round the LORD,
 Can search his secret will;
 But they perform his heavenly word,
 And sing his praises still.

IV.

Then let me join this holy train
 And my first off'rings bring;
 The eternal God, will not disdain,
 To hear an infant sing.

V.

My heart resolves, my tongue obeys,
 And angels shall rejoice;
 To hear their mighty Maker's praise,
 Sound from a feeble voice,

A N O T H E R.

HAPPY's the child whose youngest years
 Receive instructions well :
 Who hates the sinners path, and fears
 The road that leads to hell.

When we devote our youth to God,
 'Tis pleasing in his eyes :
 A flower, when offer'd in the bud,
 Is no vain sacrifice.

'Tis easier work if we begin
 To fear the Lord betimes ;
 While sinners that grow old in sin
 Are harden'd in their crimes.

'Twill save us from a thousand snares
 To mind religion young :
 Grace will preserve our following years,
 And make our virtue strong.

To thee, **ALMIGHTY GOD**, to thee.
 Our childhood we resign :
 'Twill please us to look back and see
 That our whole lives were thine.

Let the sweet work of prayer and praise,
 Employ my youngest breath ;
 Thus I'm prepar'd for longer days,
 Or fit for early death.

A N

EXHORTATION.

My good Child.

WE all desire the blessing of God, that is to say, we all desire long-life, health, friends, fortune, and every other thing necessary, to render this world convenient and agreeable; which can only be acquired by that means. But how are we to gain his blessing? Why, he has told us himself: *Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:* In other words, *only pray to the giver of all good things, with your whole hearts, and he will undoubt-*

edly grant whatever you desire, unless in his great wisdom, he should know it for your disadvantage; and shall we not comply with this easy command, surely if that alone were sufficient, we should be upon our knees to the Almighty Creator, every hour in the day.

But we must not deceive ourselves neither: prayer, as it is one of the most necessary, so it is one of the most sacred things, and should never be gone about in a trifling or inattentive manner; what signifies

nifies hurrying over a set of words, which we have learned by rote: or can we be so foolish as to imagine that by doing so, we should gain the love of God; on the contrary, such petitions will rather make him angry with us, since they be an affront to his Divine power; and only let us consider with ourselves if we apply to our parents or tutors, on any indifferent occasion, but much more when we come to ask a favour of them, will we not speak with respect, and modesty; how then shall we presume to address God in a different stile, he who made us, and can strike us dead in an instant.

It is not meerly saying our prayers therefore, but the devotion with which

we say them, that is acceptable to God; and for this reason whenever we go to our knees, it should be with such calmness and reverence, calling our thoughts together, and making our minds, as humble as our posture: in a word, with our hands closed together, and our eyes, but above all our hearts, intent upon Heaven, we should pray in a slow and distinct voice, nor, 'till we rise, should we suffer any object to engage us, save that one, which we ought always to regard as, the witness of every thing we say and do, God the eternal judge, and overseer of mankind.

Our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in a most particular manner recommended this sort of prayer to his disciples.

Also

Also setting them an example, by frequently and fervently praying himself; it is the duty of all Christians therefore, to spend some time of every day, in thus holy exercising, beseeching, and give thanks, but particularly every morning, and every evening of our lives; when we get up, and when we lie down, this is a duty so incumbent upon us, that no worldly business, can excuse the omission of it.

And because a set form of prayer, is in many re-

spects preferable to any thing we can offer immediately from ourselves, I have here (in order also to fulfil a former promise) provided one for you. At the same time, hoping that you will not suffer my care to be fruitless, but by saying what is prescribed on the several occasions, with a pure heart, and humble voice, render yourselves acceptable petitioners at the throne of grace, as well as receivers of those benefits which they are intended to procure.

A Morning Prayer.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, accept, I beseech you, of my most humble thanks, for the sweet and whole-

some sleep, with which you have blessed me this night; as well as for your great goodness, in that now you have vouchsafed to raise me from

from my bed in health. And it is my most earnest prayer, that you would not only condescend to guide my steps through this day, but through every day of my future life; so as that I may always act according to your holy will and commandments; keep, I beseech you, my tongue from lying, and every evil word, my

thoughts from wandering; and grant me all those things for my advantages, which my own youth and inexperience render me incapable of asking, for the sake of thy only begotten Son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who once condescended to be a child as I am. *Amen.*

Another.

BLESSED be thy holy name, O gracious God, for the protection I have received from thy hand this night past, and for thy continual care and preservation of me hitherto. Be pleased to continue me still under thy watchful providence, that no evil may befall me this day; and grant me grace to avoid all tempta-

tions to sin, that I may do nothing that is contrary to thy most holy commandments: but that as I grow in years, so I may grow in good learning and grace, to the glory of thy heavenly Majesty, and the salvation of my immortal soul; through Jesus Christ, our only Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

An Evening Prayer.

ETERNAL and merciful God, look upon me thy young and as yet innocent servant, with an eye of tenderness and compassion; and as you have, in thy good providence, thought proper to bring me safely through all the perils of the past day, so I most humbly implore, that you will defend me from the dangers of the following night. Watch over me, I beseech thee, with thy most holy Spirit, near which no wicked thing dare to come. You that are a protector to the lambs, and guard the little birds in their nests. Bless me, I beseech you, with a sound and refreshing sleep; and as you called forth light from darkness, so wake me again, to repeat my prayers and thanksgivings to thy Divine Power; in the name and mediation of him, who liveth and reigneth with thee for evermore. *Amen.*

Another.

O Lord God Almighty, who, by thy provident care, hast safely brought me to the conclusion of this day; I offer thee the tribute of my humblest thanks and praise, for that and all thy mercies from time to time conferred upon me; be pleased, O gracious Father, to protect me this night from all harm. Pardon the sins I have committed against thee this day.

day, whether in thought, word, or deed; and blot out all my transgressions, through the blood of the holy Jesus; endue me with thy heavenly grace, that I may live godly, and soberly in this world; bless my parents, my friends, my relations, and those that

have the care of my education, that by their prudent means, I may daily increase in learning and good manners, as I advance in years, to the glory of thy divine Majesty, through Jesus Christ my Lord.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer.

OUR Father which art in Heaven; hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive them that that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil; For thine is the kingdom, And the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.

A Prayer for Father and Mother.

OH most Divine Creator, Father and Lord of heaven and earth! who hath commanded us to love and honour those who

gave us being, to cherish and obey them in all things. Bless, I beseech you, my dear honoured father and mother, (*this may be varied,*
as

as occasion requires) preserve their health, increase their substance, and accept of their devotions; *grant them a long life, to be a mutual comfort to each other, and that I may always behave*

myself, in a dutiful and affectionate manner towards them, so as to merit their affection, and your favour, for the sake of thy only Son, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Relations in general.

OH God! who for the sake of thy servant *Abraham*, didst countenance and protect all his family, bless, I beseech you, my relations and friends, but in particular, (*here the several degrees of kindred may be named*) endow them with health and plenty, but

above all, with the grace of thy holy Spirit, so as that when they are at last summoned to appear before your great tribunal, they may go with a resigned will, and a perfect hope in thy divine mercy, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The C R E E D.

I Believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth: and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,

born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, he descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead, he

he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty: from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost,

the Holy Catholick Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

The ten Commandments.

I. **T**HOU shalt have none other gods but me.

II. Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them. For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,

and shew mercy unto thousands in them that love me and keep my commandments.

III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

IV. Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath-day, six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt do manner of work, thou

tho
thy
serv
van
stra
gate
Lon
eart
in t
seve
Lon
day,
V
and
may
whic
give

O
the
and
auth
who
my
shall

thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, thy manservant, and thy maid-servant, thy cattle, and the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.

V. Honour thy father and mother, that thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt do no murder.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbours house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbours wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his.

A Prayer in Sickness.

OH! Lord God Almighty, who is a like the dispenser of sickness and health, who is the author of life and death, who brought me out of my mother's womb, and shall again speak me into

my primitive being; look down upon me, I beseech you, on the bed where I now lie, afflicted by thy divine permission, with a heavy fit of sickness: if I shall persevere in thy holy ways, if I shall continue still

still to act according to thy blessed word and commandments, save me, I beseech you, from that death which now threatens me: but if, on the contrary, you perceive through your Almighty wisdom, that I shall grow wicked, dissolute, or

in any way unbecoming of the name of Christian, take me, I beseech thee, this instant, to thy divine mansions, and save me from myself, for the sake of that Jesus, who gave himself a sacrifice for all sinners *Amen.*

The Blessing.

THE grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us now, and for ever-more. *Amen.*

Grace before Meat.

OH God, who art the giver of all good things, who feedest the hungry, and providest meat even for the beasts in the field, bless we, beseech thee, all these good creatures to our use, and us to thy service.

Grace after Meat.

FOR all thy blessings, but in particular for that which we have just now received, oh! most gracious and bountiful God, we return you our most humble thanks.

T H E



g of
take
is in-
nan-
from
e of
him-
fin-

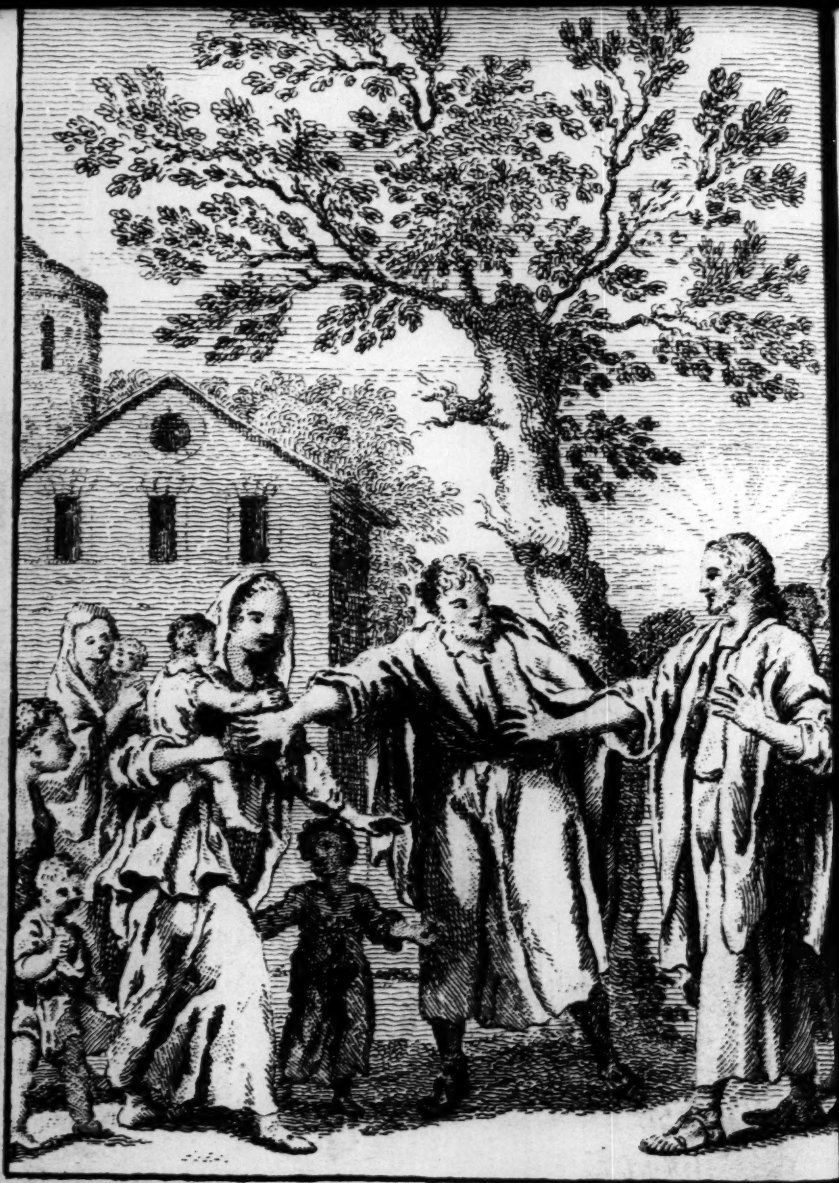
Holy
ow,
men.

nce,
s to
thy

od,
oft

E





Suffer little Children to come unto me & forbid them not &

A N
H I S T O R Y
O F T H E
N E W T E S T A M E N T.



L O N D O N :
Printed in the Year 1759.

THE HISTORY
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT



Printed in the Year 1789



1. The
Ma
5-

1.

for t
upon
of th
now
holy
foll
conc
who
out a
com
the
Wh



T H E
Childrens Bible.

C H A P T E R I.

1. *The conception of John Baptist.* 2. *The salutation of the Virgin Mary.* 3. *The birth of Christ.* 4. *The coming of the wise men.* 5. *The murder of the innocents.*

1. **T**HE time foretold by the prophets for the appearance of God upon earth, in the person of the *Messiah*, beginning now to draw nigh, the holy Scripture gives us the following account of the conception of *John Baptist*, who was always pointed out as the person that should come before him, under the character of *Elias*. While his father was

executing his office, as one of the inferior priests in the temple of *Jerusalem*, he was surprized at the appearance of an angel, who brought the joyful news, that God intended to bless him with a son, whose name should be *John*, and whose appearance, in the world, should be a certain token of the near approach of *Christ*; but this, *Zacharias* was slow to believe,

believe, on account of his own great age, as well as his wifes long barrenness, and therefore desired some miracle in confirmation of it; upon which the angel let him know that he was no less than *Gabriel*, a special attendant on GOD's throne, however, since he was weak enough to doubt of the truth of what he told him, he should have a sign, and one also, which should be a punishment to him; accordingly, *Zacharias* immediately became both deaf and dumb, nor was he restored again to his sight and hearing, 'till eight days after his son *John the Baptist* was born

2. The prophets foretelling the birth of Christ, expressly declared that he should be born of a pure virgin, and of the house

and family of *David*; six months after the conception of *Elizabeth*, therefore the same angel *Gabriel*, was sent to *Nazareth*, a city of *Galilee*; to a virgin named *Mary*, (a near relation of *Elizabeth*'s, and one of *David*'s direct descendants) who had lately been contracted in marriage to one *Joseph*, of the same family indeed, but of no higher a profession than that of a carpenter; and this virgin the angel began to congratulate on her good fortune; in being so highly favoured by GOD ALMIGHTY; as to be the person appointed by him, to bring forth the Saviour of the world; the long expected *Messiah*, whom she should call *Jesus*, and whose kingdom should have no end.

Conscious

noc
priz
nar
virg
with
him
neve
how
a c
answ
conc
mean
that
to th
form
Eliza
stand
renne
that
with
the b
herse
as fo
depar
counfir

Conscious of her own innocence and virtue, yet surprized at this so extraordinary apparition, the holy virgin began to expostulate with the angel, telling him that as yet, she had never cohabited with man, how then should she have a child; but the angel answered, that she should conceive by supernatural means; and, to shew her that nothing was impossible to the ALMIGHTY, he informed her, that her cousin *Elizabeth* was, notwithstanding her former barrenness, and her old age, at that time six months gone with a boy. Whereupon the blessed Mary humbled herself before God, and as soon as the angel was departed, went to pay her cousin *Elizabeth* a visit.

3. And here *Mary* con-

tinued for about the space of three months, at the end of which time returning home, the signs of her pregnancy were quite visible, so that her contracted husband *Joseph*, imagining she had been unchaste, was minded to give her a private releasement from their intended marriage: but before he had time to put this design in execution, an angel from heaven appearing to him in a dream, intirely satisfied all his scruples; so *Joseph* took the virgin home to his house; and the time of her deliverance being pretty near at hand; and *Bethlehem* being the place foretold by the *prophets* for our *Saviour's* birth, that matter was brought to pass in the following manner.

L 3

4. *Augustus*

4. *Augustus Caesar* (no doubt by the secret direction of God) issued a proclamation, commanding, that all the people under the Roman empire should be taxed, according to their several estates and condition. Now *Joseph* and his wife *Mary* being both of the tribe of *Judah*, were, by virtue of this order, obliged to go to *Bethlehem*, the immediate city belonging to their tribe, and the great crowds of people having already taken up all the inns, when they arrived, they were obliged to go into a stable, not being able to find any other lodging. Here they had not been long, before the blessed Virgin was delivered of a son, whom she wrapt in swaddling cloaths, and laid down to rest in a manger.

But notwithstanding that the birth of *our Saviour* was thus far obscure, God was pleased the very same night to reveal it to some shepherds, who were watching their flocks in a neighbouring field, by the appearance of an angel; who had no sooner pronounced the glad tidings, than an innumerable multitude of the heavenly hosts appeared in the air, surrounded with most splendid glory, and they all broke out in that divine chorus, *Glory be to God on high; on earth peace; goodwill towards men.*

And after this the shepherds, in consequence of a sign given them by the first Angel, went into the city, where they found *Mary* and her holy Infant, which last they worshipped

and

and returned, praising God and extolling his mercies, to the great amazement of all those that heard them.

As soon as the child was eight days old, his parents had him circumcised at the temple of *Jerusalem*, calling his name *JESUS*, according to the command of God; but as they were bringing him, to submit himself to this part of his country's custom, an old man, named *Simeon*, beholding him, began to praise God in an extacy of devotion, for that he had permitted him to see, before he died, that which should save all mankind. Nor was the sudden rapture of *Anna*, an aged widow, less extraordinary, who, also seeing him upon this occasion in the temple, began to

glorify God, with a prophetick spirit, and testified, that the child was the true *Messiah*.

After these acts, *Joseph* and *Mary* returning to *Bethlehem*, God thought proper to reveal the birth of his Son, not to the Jews only, but to other nations; and this he did by causing an uncommon star to rise in the East, which some learned men, in those parts, observing, and understanding withal, that this was to signify the birth of the *Messiah* promised to the Jews, they travelled as far as *Jerusalem*, making enquiries after this new born prince; which coming to *Herod's* ears, (who reigned at that time tetrarch, or king of *Judea*, by the favour of the Roman emperor) he

sent for them, and having communed for some time about the matter, he charged them, if they should get any farther intelligence of it, that they should return and bring him word. Now I must inform you, that *Christ* had always been fore-told as one who should appear in the character of a king, which the besotted people never considered in it's pure and spiritual light, so that *Herod* was afraid the *Messiah* would rob him of his kingdom; for which reason, he resolved, if possible, to destroy him.

But God, who sees the hearts of men, and can prevent their evil intentions, put this out of his power; for the wise men, being still conducted by the star, at last came to

the very place where our blessed Saviour was, and there offering several gifts, as to a God, and worshiping him, they departed into their own country by another road.

Now when *Herod* found how he was set at nought and disappointed, he rose up in a great fury, and sending for his officers, he ordered them to go into *Bethlehem*, and kill every child from two years old and under, by which expedient, he thought this dreaded rival could not escape; but here again he was baffled, for God ALMIGHTY fore-warning *Joseph* in a dream, commanded him to take *Mary*, his wife, and her son, and fly into *Egypt*; which they did, time enough to escape the intended murder. Neither

ther did they return again into Judea, 'till Herod was dead : and God, in order

to fulfil a prophecy, *out of Egypt recalled his Son.*

CHAPTER II.

1. *Christ goes with his parents to Jerusalem.* 2. *Is baptized by John.* 3. *Is tempted by the devil.* 4. *Christ cleanses the temple.* 5. *John Baptist imprisoned and beheaded.*

1. **C**H R I S T being twelve years old, went up with his parents to *Jerusalem*, at the time of the *passover*. Who after having performed the usual ceremonies of that *feast*, were again returning home with great numbers of their acquaintance, when at the end of the first days, journey, they missed their Son ; it is impossible to express their terror and anxiety upon this occasion, but going back to *Jerusalem*, with all the speed they could, at the expiration of three days, they found him

disputing among the doctors in the temple ; who were astonished at the greatness of his understanding, thinking him a child of ordinary extraction. Oh ! how beautiful it is, to see children well behaved and sensible, and how careful ought they to be to make themselves so, seeing that such a carriage is more admired in them, than in men of years and stature.

And from this time, to the thirtieth year of *our Saviour's* life, in which he began to appear in character of the *Messiah*, the

evangelists (those of his disciples who writ his history) are intirely silent with regard to him, save only that they say he grew in stature and in wisdom; and, as the greatest praise they could bestow, that in all things he behaved himself dutifully, and respectfully towards his parents. And I beg, my dear children, that you will carry this in your mind; for if *Jesus Christ*, who was God, and had power over all things, submitted himself in that sort to his own creatures, are not we to do so much more, who owe our lives to our parents, who are so much obliged in our infancy to their protection and assistance, when we cannot help ourselves; surely this very circumstance must be sufficient to con-

vince you, that God will punish undutiful children, with the utmost rigour of his justice.

2. I have already informed you, that *John Baptist* was sent as the immediate forerunner of the *Messiah*; he had been bred up in the wilderness, led a pious and abstemious life, and had now, for six months, been publicly preaching to and baptizing an innumerable multitude, that flocked about him on all sides; when our blessed Saviour came to the river *Jordan*, among the rest, desiring that *John* would also baptize him, he knew who talked to him, and the exalted nature of the *Messiah* too well! But Christ convincing him of the fitness of the thing, at length his modesty gave way,

way, and Jesus coming again out of the water, after having been baptized, the Heavens were miraculously opened, and the Holy Ghost descending upon him like a dove, there was a voice heard from Heaven, which said, *this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

3. After this Christ was carried by the Spirit into the wilderness of *Judea*; where, after he had fasted forty days and forty nights, and was now very hungry, the devil appeared to him in a bodily shape, and began to tempt him.

But the holy Jesus baffled all his cunning and wicked attacks, 'till at last, when the devil offered him all the glory and kingdoms of the earth, if he would fall down and wor-

ship him, Christ made answer, *thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Whereupon the devil left him for that time, and angels sent from Heaven, came with refreshments for him, after his glorious victory.

4. As soon as our Saviour came to *Jerusalem*, the first thing he did, was to reform the publick abuse of the temple, occasioned by the shops which the money changers had set up, and beasts, which dealers therein had brought into the outward court; this our LORD could not suffer with patience, and therefore, with a scourge, made of cords, he drove all those people out before him, overturning their tables, and commanding those who sold doves to depart; which

which so incensed the *Jews*, that they came and demanded of him, by what authority he did those things and to give them some evidence of a commission for it; but to this he made no other reply, than what immediately related to his future resurrection from the dead: however, though he then refused to work any miracle, we find him soon after doing many, which surprized the whole city, and not only so, but had such an effect, as to convince one *Nicodemus*, a considerable man among the *Jews*, of Christ's being really the Son of God, and coming to him privately by night, after some discourse between them, he became one of his disciples.

5. We shall now return

to *John the Baptist*, who acted in such a publick manner, and converted such a multitude of the people, that the *Jewish* doctors began to imagine that he was the *Messiah*, or at least *Elias*, who, as they thought from a prophecy, which foretold that that prophet, should come again upon earth before *the great, and terrible day of the Lord*, was to make his appearance before the *Messiah*; but *John* answered the messengers which they sent to him upon this occasion, that he was neither, but according to the words of the prophet *Malachi*, *the voice of one crying, in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord*. And *John* bore testimony to all people, of our Lord's being the true and expected *Messiah*;

Messiah ; but in particular, as Christ was returning from the wilderness, where he had been tempted, *John* pointed him out to the multitude, as *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world*, to two of his own disciples ; also he gave the same testimony next day, in so much, that they left their old master, and followed Jesus, as did several others ; nor did *John* fail upon all occasions to own the superiority of *Jesus Christ* over himself, who should soon decline (he said) even as the morning star decreases before the light of the sun.

Now *John* was at this time in the territories of *Herod Antipas*, the son of that *Herod*, who murdered all the little children, and

being of great freedom of speech, and coming to *Herod's* court, he reproved him so openly for living in adultery with his brother *Philip's* wife, that the woman conceived an irreconcilable hatred towards him ; nor did she ever leave teasing the king, who otherwise respected and revered *John*, 'till she prevailed upon him to throw him into prison, with an intent to have him destroyed, whenever she could find out a proper opportunity. And at last her malice was fully satisfied ; for her daughter dancing at a feast before the king and his lords, sometime after, *Herod* was so pleased with her performance, that he swore to grant whatever she asked ; who being instructed by

by her mother, demanded the head of *John the Baptist*, and the king because he had sworn, would not deny her, though he complied with much reluctance; so the pious and

holy *John*, thus fell a sacrifice to the fury of a wicked woman, while his head was brought in a charger, to glut her revenge still more.

CHAPTER III.

1. *Christ and the woman of Samaria.* 2. *Christ preacheth at Nazareth.* 3. *The miraculous draught of fishes.* 4. *The palsy-man.* 5. *The twelve apostles selected.* 6. *Christ dines at Simon's-house.*

1. **T**HE *Pharisees* were a set of people among the *Jews*, very abstemious as it should seem in their outward manner of living, being great observers of all ceremonies enjoined by the *Jewish* law, but in reality they were a pack of proud, hypocritical knaves; these therefore, when our LORD found beginning to grow envious of him in *Judea*, he determined to depart from

thence, and to go over into *Galilee*; in this journey, it was necessary for him to pass thro' *Samaria*, where he was no sooner come, than being hot and faint with walking, he sent his disciples into the city to buy food, and sat himself down by the side of a well. Here a woman shortly after came out to draw water, and Christ desiring her to give him a draught, she perceiving he was a *Jew*, took the

the liberty to ask him, how he could make such a request to a *Samaritan*, with which people his nation had such great quarrels, and so little dealings, but after a short discourse, in which Christ took occasion from water, to talk to her of spiritual blessings, how was she surprized when he began to tell her every circumstance of her past ill-spent life (for she had been a very lewd woman), and at last, that he was the promised *Messiah*; she immediately ran into the city, proclaiming aloud the person she had met with, and the inhabitants then coming out, invited our LORD to pass some time with them.

2. Well had it been for the city of *Nazareth*, had that behaved in a like grate

ful and complaisant manner to him; but when he went there, as to the place of his education, very widely different was their conduct. Our LORD went into the *Synagogue* (the *Jewish Synagogues* were somewhat in the nature of our churches, where the Bible was read to the people) on the *Sabbath Day*, and standing up to read, as any person had a right to do, he began at a passage in *Isaiah*, in these words, *the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor*, which he applied to himself, in the most graceful and eloquent manner; but his hearers calling to mind his low birth, and education, though many of them could not help being charmed with his discourse,

course, began to despise him, which he perceiving, and upbraiding them for their ingratitude, the whole assembly rose up, and hurrying him out of the city, brought him to the brow of a hill, with a design to have cast him headlong down, had he not miraculously conveyed himself out of their sight.

3. After this, Christ taking up his residence at the city of *Capernaum*, he had not long been there, before great multitudes flocked unto him; and walking one day by the side of a neighbouring lake, he got into a ship, desiring the master of it, a fisherman, to put a little from shore, that he might teach the people. Now *Peter*, for it was to him whom Christ spoke, with his com-

panions, *James*, *John*, and *Andrew*, all afterwards the apostles of our LORD, had been hard at work all night, fishing, but without any success. When his discourse was ended, therefore, Jesus ordered them to launch out a little farther, and let down their nets for a draught, this in obedience to him they did, nor had they any cause to repent it; for they instantly inclosed such a multitude of fishes, that their tackle began to break, and they were obliged to call some others of their profession, to come to their assistance.

4. This miracle could not fail of convincing the men of our Saviour's divinity; they followed him, therefore, into the city, where in a little time after, being

being in a house with many great persons, brought together by their curiosity to hear him, four people came bearing a man sick of the palsy on his bed, but finding it impossible to pass through the crowd, they uncovered the roof of the house, and let down the sick man, bed and all, into the very room where Christ was sitting; he was instantly determined to cure the man, but first told him; that his sins were forgiven him, which expression the people about him, looking upon as blasphemous, he reprov'd their evil thoughts, and then by curing the patient before him, immediately demonstrated his power to forgive sins: which so thoroughly convinced, and amazed them, that they all began to glorify God, declaring,

that the like had never been seen in *Israel* 'till that day.

5. Many of the unbelieving *Jews*, still continuing to contrive our LORD's destruction, he retired to a solitary mountain, where he continued all night in prayer, intending the next morning to make an election of some particular persons, from among the multitude of his disciples, who should be witnesses to all mankind, of his words and actions, and, after his return to Heaven, preach the Gospel to all the inhabitants of this world. The name of the men he chose, and who were distinguished by the title of apostles, were as follows, *Peter, Andrew, James the great, James the less, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, Simon,*

Simon, Judas the brother of *James*, and *Judas Iscariot*, who afterwards betrayed him. And as he perceived the multitude gathering round him, these he called nearer than the rest, and began that most excellent discourse, which lays down all the great principles of the Christian Religion, and is called his Sermon in the Mount.

6. Christ had been now preaching for a considerable time, to a very large assembly, when closing with that comfortable invitation, *come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, a certain rich *Pharisee* named *Simon*, came and asked him to dinner; but while he was at table, there happened an incident somewhat extraordinary. For a certain

woman, who not long before, had been remarked for her lewdness, came in, and falling at his feet, washed them with the tears which flowed from her eyes, and then having wiped them with her hair, she kissed them, and anointed them with a very precious ointment. *Simon* thought this was in *Jesus*, a thing unbecoming, to suffer a bad woman to behave in such a manner with regard to him; but our Saviour who knew his thoughts, in a beautiful parable defended the woman, and in return for her kindness, told her all her sins were pardoned, which some of the company seemed to resent as an affront to the Divine Majesty, but that gave Christ no manner of uneasiness.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IV.

1. *The miracle of the loaves.* 2. *Christ walks upon the water.* 3. *His transfiguration.* 4. *His advice to his apostles.* 5. *His behaviour at Jerusalem.*

JESUS had just now received the news of *John the Baptist's* death, by the report of some of his disciples; when his own apostles returned from an expedition, which he had lately sent them upon, in order to preach the gospel in all the neighbouring cities. And the fame of our Saviour, and his miracles were so great, that *Herod* began to imagine, that *John*, whom he had beheaded, was come to life again, to revenge his blood upon him; Christ therefore, knowing the cruelty of that prince, took shipping with a design to retire for a while to a de-

sert near *Bethsaida*; but in vain was it for him to think of concealing himself, the people seeing where he went aboard, followed him round by land, and were got to the desert almost as soon as he, which instance of their zeal, so affected his compassion, that he immediately ascended a mountain, and taking his disciples with him, he there first instructed them in several things concerning the kingdom of God; and having afterwards cured their sick, he at last fed them all to the number of five thousand men, besides women and children, with five barley loaves

M

loaves, and two small fishes, and that with so extraordinary a plenty, that no less than 12 baskets, were taken up of the broken meat.

This miracle had such an effect upon the people, that they no longer doubted of his being the *Messiah*, and were going to set him up for their king, by main force; but he knowing the mischief of such a design, constrained his disciples immediately to take shipping, in order to go to *Caper-naum*, while himself stayed behind to dismiss the multitude; which being done, he continued 'till midnight in meditation and prayer.

2. In the mean time, the vessel where the apostles were on board, was tossed by a great storm on the middle of the lake, and when morning appeared,

they had hardly got a league on their voyage; at which time, our Saviour came walking upon the surface of the sea, and drew near the ship. This strange appearance increased their fear not a little; but Christ calling out, told them who he was, when *Peter*, by his permission, getting out of the ship to meet him, began to sink; the LORD then blamed the weakness of his faith, and reaching out his hand, set him firmly on the top of the waters, and walked with him to the ship, where they were no sooner entered, than the whole company fell down and worshipped Christ, and it was not long before they arrived in their desired harbour.

3. A few days after this, after talking for some

CHA
some
of
our
hear
mue
this
not
of t
of
acco
him
Job
mo
he v
he
for
pea
lust
mo
and
pie
thr
the
fno
ver
lia
ly

some time to his apostles of his future sufferings, our LORD, to revive their hearts, which he observed much cast down upon this occasion, thought it not improper to give some of them at least a specimen of his future glory; and accordingly, taking with him, *Peter, James, and John*, he ascended an high mountain, and there while he was employed in prayer, he was suddenly transformed into another appearance; for a bright lustre darted from his face, more glorious than the sun, and a dazzling splendour piercing from his body, thro' his garments, made them appear whiter than snow; during this heavenly scene, *Moses and Elias* stood talking familiarly with him, and discour-

sing of his death and sufferings.

The apostles during the continuation of this fell asleep, but waking before the glory again disappeared, they were suddenly covered with a bright cloud, and a voice came from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.* Upon which the apostles were seized with greater consternation than ever, and fell prostrate on the earth, 'till our LORD encouraging them they looked up, and saw no one but himself; and as they descended the mountain, he charged them to keep the things they had seen secret, *until he was risen from the dead.*

4. From the mount of transfiguration, our LORD proceeded

proceeded on his journey, through the other parts of *Galilee*, towards *Capernaum*; and as they were in their way, he acquainted his apostles the second time with his approaching death and resurrection; but they were so full of the hopes of an earthly kingdom, that they found it very difficult to believe, or conceive what he meant, and afterwards they began to dispute among themselves, about who should have the first place of dignity, when Christ sat upon his throne. This our Saviour knew, and to give an effectual check to their ambition, he first informed them, that the only way for any man to become great in his kingdom, was to be lowly in his own esteem; and then calling a little child,

and setting him in the midst of them, he proposed him as a pattern of meekness and humility; recommended such children, and in them all humble-minded christians, to the favour of mankind; cautioned them against doing any injury, or giving any offence to such, because of their guardian angels, and to remove the occasion of all such offences, exhorted them to mortify all their carnal affections.

And shall children be unmindful of this honour done them, by the God of heaven and earth; and shall they not take care, least by stubbornness, peevishness, lying, ill language, or any other offence, they forfeit his esteem; surely they would do so, if they considered

considered, that they have continually an angel watching over their actions, which, was not God a witness of them himself, would not fail to give him constant intelligence thereof.

5. But about this time, the feast of tabernacles drawing near, Christ prepared to go with his disciples to *Jerusalem*, where for some days after his arrival, he did not appear publicly, to the no small vexation of the inhabitants, many of whom had never seen him; but at length, when every one began to despair, about the middle of the feast, he shewed himself, teaching in the temple, and all places of publick resort, to the great admiration of the *Jews*. Those indeed who knew the hatred,

which the ruling part of the nation had conceived against him, admired to hear him speak with such freedom; and in the conclusion, officers were sent by the government to apprehend him; but they were so taken with his person and preaching, that they became his disciples, instead of executing the orders of their superiors; which so incensed the council, that they would immediately have seized and imprisoned him, had not one of their own number, *Nicodemus*, who was secretly a disciple of *Christ's*, rose up and spoke in his justification; so they dissolved the assembly, and proceeded no farther against him, for that time; while our Saviour continued to perform many miracles, and

preach the word of GOD | during the rest of his stay
with the utmost boldness, | at Jerusalem.

CHAPTER V.

1. *Mary and Martha.* 2. *Christ's admirable doctrine.* 3. *He receives the children.* 4. *Lazarus raised from the dead.*

1. **T**HERE was a very extraordinary disease, almost peculiar to the *Jewish* nation, of which at this day, we can have no notion, only that we may be sure, people were formerly afflicted with it; since the Scripture positively asserts it over and over again; the disease I mean was possession, or that power which GOD permitted the devil of entering and tormenting the bodies of particular men and women; but has long since been taken from him, *Christ's* sufferings having totally abolished satan's reign. *Mary Magdalene,*

a beautiful widow, of distinction among the *Jews*, was one of these unfortunate sufferers: we are told indeed, that our LORD, cast no less than seven devils out of her, and whereas, she had before led a very loose life, she from that time became a most glorious example of virtue and piety; and followed our Saviour during his whole ministry, with the utmost tenderness, adoration, and devotion.

A conduct like this towards one of so sweet and generous a disposition, could not fail of endearing her whole family to him, and

and after his departure from *Jerusalem*, we find him at the house of *Martha*, *Mary's* elder sister, who lived about two miles from that city, in a small village called *Bethany*; but while *Martha* was busy, in making preparation for his entertainment, her sister *Mary* sat with the company listening to his instructions: and when *Martha* complained to him, that her sister had left the whole burthen of the business upon her, and thereupon desired him to send her to her assistance, our LORD commended *Mary's* choice, and though he did not slight *Martha's* civility, preferred her sister's attention to his doctrine before it.

2. Upon his return to *Galilee*, as he was one day

praying with his disciples, in a private place, they humbly besought him to compose a form of prayer for their use; whereupon he gave that excellent form called the LORD's prayer; and not only so, but encouraged and exhorted them to be constant in their petitions to the Divine Majesty; who, as a father, infinitely more indulgent than any earthly parent could be, would certainly never fail to hear them. Christ often preached against covetousness, or the folly and wickedness of men placing their happiness in worldly possessions; he inveighed strongly against hypocrisy, and falseness of heart; recommended meekness, sobriety, and modesty; enjoined love, not only among relations,

but betwixt all mankind one to another; who should be charitable, compassionate; neither envying one for the goods he possessed, nor refusing to help him with those he stood in need of. Pride, passion, and ill-nature, he commanded all his followers to renounce; admitting none among them, but such as were peace-makers, meek in spirit, patient, gentle, and of a tender disposition: in a word, the end of the Christian Doctrine is this, to root out every vice, to which the human nature is liable, and to plant in their stead, every virtue; and he that can boast himself really and truly a Christian, only waits for the dissolution of his mortal body, to become one with the eternal and incorruptible

angels; so pure will he be in spirit, and so void of offence, both towards God and man.

3. I shall now give you one instance more, of the great regard and care which Christ always expressed for children. Going over the river *Jordan*, and being followed by a vast multitude, whom he both taught, and healed of several diseases which were among them. Some observing his great readiness to do good, brought some little boys and girls with them, in order to partake of his divine blessing; but the disciples thinking it below the dignity of their master, to be disturbed with infants, at first refused admittance to those that brought them; 'till *Jesus* having reproved them for
so

so doing, and withal recommended the innocence and simplicity of these babes, as a pattern for there imitation; commanded them all to be introduced, and taking them up in his arms, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them, and so departed from the place where this transaction happened.

4. Our Saviour being now in *Perga*, he received a message out of *Judea*, from his two friends, *Martba* and *Mary*, of the dangerous sickness of a brother of theirs, named *Lazarus*, a person highly beloved and esteemed by him; but he proposing, on this occasion, to manifest the glory of God, as well his own Divine power, by a greater miracle than

a simple cure, delayed his going 'till *Lazarus* was dead, and then set forward.

By the time that our LORD arrived at *Bethany*, *Lazarus* had been buried four days, and several friends, and others from *Jerusalem*, were come to condole with *Martba* and *Mary*, for the great loss they had sustained; when on the news of Christ's arrival, they all came out of the house, but in particular, the two sisters lamenting grievously, and falling at our LORD's feet, wished over and over again, that he had come a little sooner, for then they said they were sure *Lazarus* would not have died; the sight of their tears and sorrows affected the Son of God; and then demanding

ing where they had laid the body, he followed them to the place, even weeping as they did; which made some of the company wonder, considering how well he had loved the deceased, that he had not prevented his death; but they were all soon convinced of their error, when coming to the burial place, Christ ordered the stone

to be removed from the mouth, and after a short prayer going towards it, he cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth*; whereupon he that was dead, immediately arose from the place where he lay, and in such sound health, that when the grave cloaths were unloosed, he was able to walk along with them to *Bethany*.

CHAPTER VI.

Of our Saviour's miracles.

IT is the character given to Christ, by St *Luke*, in his Acts of the Apostles, that, *he was a man approved of God, by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of all the people*: And indeed these miracles were an undoubted evidence of

his being not only the immediate messenger of God, but even God himself; who by a touch, a look, a word speaking, could command all the operations of nature, even contrary to their usual course: for who but God, could cure the sick, heal the

the leprous, give sight to the blind, strength to the lame, and raise the dead, even as the very enemies of our holy religion confess Christ did; but wickedly ascribe it to the devil; whereas we know the devil can have no such power, nor if he had, would he employ it in doing good; however, it is of great consequence to the credit of christianity, that the *Jews* never attempted to deny Christ's performing miracles; and in order to let you see the extent and nature of them: I shall here subjoin a catalogue of the most remarkable not already taken notice of; I say the most remarkable, because, as the apostle very justly asserts, were all his miracles set down, even the world itself would not

be large enough to contain the number of books, which must be employed to write them in.

1. Being at a marriage-feast in the city of *Cana in Galilee*, where the wine ran short; he, at the request of his virgin-mother, turned a great quantity of water into wine, which was remarkable for the excellence of it's flavour.

2. He cured the son of a great officer belonging to the court, only by speaking a word, when he was at a great distance from the child; who being convinced thereby of our Lord's divinity, with his whole family was converted to the faith.

3. In his progress thro' *Galilee*, he met with a man overspread with a foul leprosy, whom upon his humble

humble petition, with one touch, he immediately healed.

4. On the south-east side of *Jerusalem*, there was a famous pool, and an hospital called *Bethesda*, in which lay a great multitude of poor diseased people, waiting for an angel, who at certain times came from heaven; and putting the pool into a fermentation, conveyed such virtue into it, that the first person who entered afterwards, was immediately cured of whatever distemper he or she laboured under. On the sabbath-day, our Saviour came to this place, and seeing a poor *paralytick*, who had been afflicted for upwards of thirty years, and had long lain there, in hopes of being cured, but in vain; because he had no

body to help him in; he healed him directly, ordering him to take up his bed and walk home; but while he was doing this, the *Jews* exclaimed against him, for carrying a burthen on the sabbath-day which was unlawful; and as soon as they found that Jesus Christ had been the person who cured him, and had bid him do it, they instantly seized him, and brought him before the council, as an open profaner of the sabbath; but Jesus shewed them their hypocrisy, and that the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; however, we must be extremely cautious, how we consider Christ as a favourer of taking any unwarrantable liberties with that holy season set a part by

by God himself, for rest and piety. And we shall find that Christ never employed himself on it in any thing but in doing good actions, which we are never to miss an opportunity of.

5. On his arrival at the gates of a strange city, he restored to life a widow's only son, as the people were carrying him out to his funeral; to the great joy and comfort of the parent, and the no less astonishment of the spectators, who upon this occasion glorified God; and publickly declared, that a *great and mighty prophet, was sprung up among them, and that God had visited his people.*

6. While Christ was on a voyage, being asleep in the stern of the ship, there

arose a most terrible storm, so that his disciples awoke him, fearing every minute that they should be swallowed up; but when he arose, on his rebuking the waves, they obeyed his command, and immediately there was a dead calm, to the no small surprize of every one that saw it.

7. After this he dispossessed a man of a whole legion of devils, which he permitted to enter into a herd of swine.

8. A woman by stealth, only touching the skirts of his coat, was cured of a foul disease, under which she had laboured many years.

9. He raised the daughter of one *Jairus* from the dead, and restored her to her parents.

10. At

10. At *Bethsaida*, when a blind man was presented him for cure, he took him out of the gates of the city; and then anointing his eyes with spittle, and laying his hands upon him, the man was restored to sight.

These and an innumerable multitude of the like wonders, did our Lord and Saviour Christ perform among the *Jews*; and yet they would not believe in him; but at last condemned him to the most painful and ignominious death; but it was for our

good: by his suffering we are healed; by his death we live to all eternity; and to give you a due sense of your great obligations to such an excellent Redeemer, I shall now lay before you this glorious, though melancholy scene; shewing you the eternal and all powerful God, submitting to the most shocking pains and indignities, for the sake of his creatures; well might the prophet ask in the person of Christ, whether ever sorrow was like to his sorrow.

CHAPTER VII.

1. *Christ enters Jerusalem in triumph.* 2. *The Jews lay snares for him.* 3. *His words and actions at Bethany.* 4. *The last supper.* 5. *Judas betrays him.*

1. OUR blessed Lord and Saviour having restored his dear friend

Lazarus to life, in the manner already related; was now within a short walk of the

the city of *Jerusalem*: however, he did not repair thither 'till next morning, when he set out from *Martha's* house, attended by a great number of people; but being come to the mount of *Olives*, there he stopt, and dispatching two of his disciples to a neighbouring village, he ordered them to bring from thence, an ass, and a colt which was not yet backed; that he might fulfil a remarkable prophecy, by riding into *Jerusalem* upon them; the disciples obeyed; and having mounted their master on the colt, he proceeded towards the city, amidst the acclamations of an innumerable multitude, whilst crowds of people came forth to meet him with branches of palm-trees in their hands, some

spreading their garments in the way, and all crying *Hosanna, to the Son of David! blessed is he, that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

2. Upon Christ's entring into *Jerusalem* in this triumphant manner, the chief priests, and the other members of the *Jewish* council, grew very uneasy; they heard every body, even the little babes in their mothers arms, proclaiming him the Son of God; nor did our Saviour forbid them; nor deny his being what they called him; so that they now thought there was an absolute necessity for taking him off; but how to contrive it was the matter, for our blessed LORD was highly admired and respected by the populace, they therefore

fore laid snares to ruin him; one of which was, that the *Pharisees* sent some to ask him, if it was lawful to pay tribute or not to *Cæsar*? If he said it was, they thought the multitude would then desert him, as a betrayer of the liberties of his country; if he said it was not, they might then accuse him as an enemy to the *Roman* emperor; but our *LORD* baffled all their treacherous design by this notable answer; *Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and to God, the things which are God's.* Thus for a time did Christ disappoint the malice of his enemies.

3. It was now the great *Jewish* feast of passover, and at the close of each day, Christ constantly re-

turned to the house of *Martha*, at *Bethany*, where he slept; it was here he foretold the destruction of *Jerusalem*, exactly as it happened about forty years after his resurrection; as also his own coming in glory at the last day; and being one night at supper with one *Simon*, a man whom he had formerly cured of a leprosy, *Mary Magdalene*, to shew her great love and value for him, came, and out of an alabaſter viol, poured a large quantity of such rich ointment upon his head, as filled the whole house with the fragrant smell: this seeming prodigality displeased the apostles, but particularly the traitor *Judas* blamed her: however, Christ received *Mary's* bounty with great gratitude,

tude, and did much honour to her for it.

This was the very night he returned from *Jerusalem*; and the next day he remained intirely at *Bethany*, in the evening he and his apostles supped at *Martha's* house; and while they were at table, considering that his time was now short, he was minded to give them a testimony of his love; and from his own example, teach them two virtues, which, of all others, were more especially requisite to Christians, humility and charity; to this purpose, rising from table, he washed every one of their feet; now *Peter* at first refused to admit of such a servile office, from his heavenly master; but when Christ urged to him the expe-

diency of what he did, the apostle acquiesced.

Soon after this, reflecting with himself, how well he had loved these his disciples; he was not a little concerned, that any of them should prove so ungrateful as to betray him: he then declared that such a thing should happen; and on *John's* request told him the person, *Judas Iscariot*; to whom he gave a sop, as he told *John* he would; and when he had so done, he *bad him go about what he had to do with all expedition*; the rest of the apostles, who were ignorant of what Christ had said to his favourite, thought our LORD spoke to *Judas* of some other matter; however, as soon as supper was ended, the traytor made off to

N

Jerusalem;

Jerusalem; where he agreed with the council to betray his master into their hands, during the absence of the multitude, for thirty pieces of silver, about four pounds sterling, of our present money.

5. In the mean time, our Saviour remained comforting and heartening the rest of his apostles; who, at the thoughts of their beloved LORD's suffering, which he now told them plainly he must do, were grown exceedingly troubled, and dispirited; but he assured them, that his death was for their good; and not only so, but for the salvation of all mankind; he added too, that he should certainly rise again the third day; but this they did not clearly understand.

The actual day of celebrating the passover being now arrived, our Saviour (his apostles, by his direction, having prepared every thing accordingly beforehand,) on the evening went to *Jerusalem*, where after the usual ceremonies upon that solemn occasion, were over, and they were all standing round the table, on which they had just eaten the paschal lamb, our LORD proceeded to the institution of a ceremony, in commemoration of his own death and passion; for he took bread, and when he had blessed it, and broke it, he distributed it to his disciples, calling it *his body*; and after he had so done, he took the cup of wine; and having in the like manner blessed

blest it, he gave it among them, calling it *his blood of the new covenant*; and commanded them to do the same, that is, to eat bread, and drink wine, in this sacramental manner, to the end of the world, in remembrance of him.

After this our LORD had much edifying discourse, with his eleven apostles, (for the wicked *Judas* had gone upon his hellish errand some time before) and among other things telling them, they would very shortly undergo a severe tryal; *Peter* declared, that he was not only ready to go with him to prison, but even to death; but our Saviour, who best knew his weakness, gave him to understand, that before the crowing of the cock, he

should deny him three times; upon which, giving them a final exhortation, and joining with them in prayer and a solemn hymn, he left the city, and passing over the brook *Cedron*, came to a garden well known to *Judas*, because thither our LORD and his apostles used frequently to retire to their devotions.

6. In this place, laying his Godhead wholly aside for the present, he underwent the most grievous sufferings; the sweat rolled off from him like great drops of blood; and the devil mustered all his infernal powers, to deter him from the salvation of man. Here he took *James*, *John*, and *Peter*, with him aside; desiring that they would join in prayer with him;

but alas! they had scarce kneeled down, when they fell fast asleep; so that he was left without any comfort or assistance, (for he would not help himself) 'till an angel was dispatched from heaven to strengthen him; with this recruit he returned the third time to his apostles, (for he had been to waken, and caution them against letting sloth creep upon them twice before) but finding them still in the same sleepy condition, he told them, that they might now rest as long as they pleased, for he had no

longer any occasion for their assistance; the words were scarcely out of his mouth, when *Judas*, accompanied with a band of soldiers and officers, came to apprehend him, and the false traytor, according to an agreement, between himself and those he brought, ran up to our LORD, and kissed him; thereby directing them who they should seize: upon which Christ was almost immediately forsaken by all his followers, and left to the merciless fury, of an enraged multitude.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. *Christ is brought before the high-priest.* 2. *Peter denies Christ.*
3. *Christ is examined by Pilate.* 4. *The cruel treatment he meets with from the Jews.* 5. *They crucify him.*

1. **T**HE soldiers having bound our LORD's hands, hurried him immediately out of the garden;

garden; and as soon as they came over to the city of *Jerusalem*, brought him to the palace of the then high-priest, called *Caia-phas*; where several of the principal elders were sitting in council, and *Peter* went into the palace after our LORD, (but at some distance) being willing to see the issue of so strange an event; and being entered into the great hall, he sat down to warm himself at the fire, among the officers and servants.

The high-priest and his confederates, as we may imagine, were not unprepared for Christ's arrival; and accordingly, though so late at night, such was their thirst for his blood, that they began to try him, the very moment they got him in their power; for

which purpose, they had procured a number of false witnesses; but they perjured so notoriously in what they alledged against him, and disagreed so shamefully with one another, that even those judges, corrupt as they were, could not, have the face to condemn any one on their evidence: they were obliged therefore, to have recourse to Christ, and try whether they could not bring him to condemn himself; then the high-priest standing up, *adjured him by the living God, to tell whether he was the Messiah, the Son of God.* Our LORD knew well enough, what would be the consequence of his giving a direct answer to that question, and the high-priest's design in putting it

to him; but as he suffered himself to be brought there with no other intent, than that he might fall a sacrifice, he gave them all the satisfaction they could wish, by immediately answering in the affirmative, *that he was*: but with all that, though he was then before them as a criminal, they should hereafter, *behold him sitting on the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven*. The high-priest upon this fell into a violent passion, called him a blasphemer, and said, there was no occasion for any thing farther against him; what he had now said, was enough to justify their passing sentence of death; and all the rest of the council agreeing, the people who stood round, immediately began

to treat him in the most ignominious and barbarous manner: spitting in his face, striking and making game of him; all which he bore without so much as returning the smallest reproach; he knew he appeared in our stead; we were guilty, and for our sins he suffered.

2. But let us see what Peter was doing, while his master was thus suffering for the sins of all mankind. You may remember, that on his confidence, in protesting his fidelity to Christ, our LORD reprov'd, and told him, that ere the cock crew twice, he should deny him thrice.

Now one of the maid-servants belonging to the high-priest's family, coming into the hall and seeing Peter, taxed him with being
one

one of Christ's disciples : but he firmly denied it ; and to another, who met him without in the porch, shortly after, even affirmed with an oath, that he knew nothing of Jesus. Nay at last, when a third person, (one who had actually, not only seen him in the garden with Christ, but even had received a hurt from him, in attempting to lay hold on his master) affirmed positively that he remembered his face, and he was certainly one of Christ's followers ; he cursed and swore, that he was an entire stranger to him, upon which the cock crew ; and *Peter* immediately calling to mind the word of our LORD, went out and wept bitterly, for having been so wicked and so weak, as to deny his best

and only friend, his king and his GOD, in his adversity.

3. The chief priests and elders, though they were sole judges in religious matters, had little or no authority in secular affairs, that being lodged intirely in the hands of a governor, sent by the *Roman* emperor to *Judea*. The man who bore this office at the time of our LORD's suffering, was *Pontius Pilate*, and to him was Jesus sent, as soon as it was light in the morning, in order that the sentence already passed upon him, might be ratified, and put into execution.

Now it being a holy season at *Jerusalem*, when those people who brought Jesus came to *Pilate's* palace, they refused to go into the hall, where he usually

usually passed sentence of death upon criminals, counting it a defilement; the governor therefore came out to them, and seeing Christ bound and led like a malefactor, he demanded what crime he had committed; upon which they alledged against him, his assuming the title of king, as an injury done to the majesty of *Cæsar*. However, *Pilate* could not be brought to condemn him, there being in fact no proof at all against him; and hearing that *Herod* was at that time in *Jerusalem*, (*Herod Antipas*, who had put *John the Baptist* to death) he sent Christ to him, as it were in compliance. But *Herod* being much disappointed, our Saviour not condescending to gratify his curiosity

either by word or action, returned him back, after having treated him ignominiously, and dressed him in an antick garment.

This served to convince *Pilate* yet more of his innocence, and being very unwilling to condemn him, and it being a custom always to release one malefactor or other, at the present feast, *Pilate* went out to the *Jews*, who now grew very clamorous for our Saviour's death, and told them, that as he could see nothing worthy of punishment in the just person whom they had brought before him, he would if they pleased, release him in compliance with the usual custom. But this offer they rejected, calling out to have *Jesus crucified*, and one *Barabbas* a murderer

murderer and a robber set free. Upon which, *Pilate* returning into the hall where he had left our blessed and spotless LORD, he was extremely perplexed and troubled, making no doubt that Christ was an extraordinary person; and these perplexities were still farther increased, by a message which he just then received from his wife, *upon no account to be necessary to the death of that just man: she having suffered many things in a dream, because of him.* But the *Jews* still persisting in their diabolical resolution to prosecute the eternal God to the cross, *Pilate* took water, and washing his hands before the multitude, desired them all to bear witness, that he was innocent of the blood

of that excellent man; *then answered all the people, and said, His blood be upon us, and upon our children.* Which curse has stuck to them in a very extraordinary and visible manner even to this day.

4. The *Jews* were now appeased, and exulted, poor unhappy creatures, in their own misery; for *Barabbas* the murderer, the robber, and the seditious villain, was delivered from his chains; and Jesus, the Lord of life; the hope of salvation, the all merciful and omnipotent LORD, was condemned to an ignominious and painful death; nor did they think that sufficient, they must add contempt to his other sufferings; and after having whipt him 'till his sacred flesh was all over wounds,
and

and gashes, every one of which sent forth a stream of blood, they in mockery put a purple robe upon him, the ensign of royalty, and crowning him with thorns, and putting a reed in his hand by way of a scepter, they saluted him in derision, *king of the Jews*: then they spit upon him, and struck him upon the head with the reed, so that the sharp thorns pierced him to the very bone, and covered his face with a stream of blood. While this Lamb of God (in the words of the prophet) *was dumb like a sheep before his shearers*, and though he might have struck all his persecutors dead, with a word, opened not his mouth. Oh my dear children! consider what you now read, and sure it must

touch your tender hearts; imagine but your blessed Saviour, in this condition, and all for your sakes; and sure it must make you weep, and resolve, by leading a good life, in some measure to reward him for all those pains and indignities: but the greatest of all, is yet to come; for the wicked and abominable *Jews* now prepared to crucify him.

5. There was a place near the city of *Jerusalem*, called *Golgotha*, or the place of a scull; to this they dragged him, amidst a noisy multitude; many of whom wept, but more reviled him; among our Saviour's friends, that attended upon this melancholy occasion, were his blessed mother the Virgin *Mary*, another *Mary*, the wife

wife of one *Cleophas*, *Mary Magdalene*, and *John* the beloved disciple of our LORD. These never left him 'till he expired, and the *Jews* meeting one *Simon* of *Cyrene* in their way, obliged him to bear the cross to the place of execution; the weight of it being so great, that Christ sunk under it.

Crucifixion was not only the most scandalous, but the most painful death that could possibly be inflicted upon any one; nor will you wonder at this, when you hear the manner of it. The figure of a cross you have often seen: it was a strait piece of wood, of a considerable length, with another piece of wood which run athwart, pretty near the top of it; on this the person to suffer, was

laid stark naked, and his feet with two large nails having been fixed to the trunk part, his hands were afterwards extended, and nailed at the two extremities of the upper piece of wood, and thus the poor wretch was raised upon it, in inexpressible torment; a mark for every one's observation, and such was the punishment with which the *Jews* thought proper to reward the Saviour of the world, for the offer of eternal life which he made them.

The *Jews* had already preferred a murderer and a robber before *Jesus*, and at his execution according to the words of an ancient prophecy concerning him, *they numbered him with the transgressors*. St *Matthew* informs us, that our LORD
was

was crucified between two thieves; but when he was hung upon the cross, there was an accusation placed over his head by the command of *Pilate*, and in the governor's own hand writing, the words of which were, **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.** A proceeding very disagreeable to those people, who cavilled at the terms, saying, that it should have been, *who said he was king of the Jews.* However, *Pilate* would make no alteration in it for them.

Is it not enough to make the heart of any one break with sorrow, to think of what horrid torments Christ must have undergone, during this dreadful interval; and how cruel and hard hearted must these monsters have been, who had the

wickedness to condemn him to them; and not condemn him only, but while he was suffering, to look on him, to wag their heads, laugh, and make a joke, desiring if *he was the Son of God, that he would come down from the cross.* Nay one of the very thieves that were crucified with him, his very fellow-sufferer reviled and abused him; but the other, God was pleased to visit with his grace, even in that very moment of his shame and agony, and letting the light of his Divine mercy in upon his soul, he acknowledged Christ to be the Son of God, and humbly besought him to remember him when he came to his kingdom; to which Christ ever ready to accept the penitent, answered

swered with a promise of his favour ; but well might he do that, when he even prayed for his very executioners ; and while they

were aggravating his misery, by every means they could think of, cried out, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

CHAPTER IX.

1. *The miracles attending Christ's death.* 2. *His burial.* 3. *His resurrection.* 4. *His appearance to his apostles.* 5. *His ascension into Heaven.*

1. **D**URING the life of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he performed such miracles in order to support his character of the Son of God, as must have fixed the belief of any people, less blind, deaf, and stubborn, than the children of *Israel*. But he was determined to give one last trial more, before he left them for ever. Accordingly he was no sooner hung on the cross in the painful manner already re-

lated, than a total darkness instantly overspread the whole land of *Judea*, which lasted (during the remainder part of his sufferings) upwards of three hours : yet the *Jews* still remained in their former infidelity ; nay, they rather grew worse and worse ; and near the close of our Lord's pangs, when he was thirsty, and called for drink, in a wanton barbarity, they dipt a sponge in vinegar, and fixing it on a reed, put it up to his mouth,

mouth; but here their malice was prevented, for the dismal tragedy being now at an end; and every prophecy relating to the *Messiah* fulfilled, even to the minutest particular, in the person of our Saviour, instead of tasting their odious draught, he turned his head from it, and crying with a loud voice, *it is finished*, died that instant. But observe what followed, the breath was no sooner out of his body, than nature was convulsed, as if she herself had suffered: there was the most shocking and dreadful earthquake that ever was; rocks were rent in pieces; and in order to stamp a particular mark of horror on the *Jews*, the inward wall of the temple of *Jerusalem*, was split from the top to the bot-

tom. Nay, the very graves were opened, and several saints and prophets, who had long lain buried in the earth, appeared to many in the streets. And this indeed, had the natural effect upon a few, who standing round the cross, and seeing all these prodigies about, with the sacred martyr upon it: lifted up their eyes to heaven, and declared of a truth, that Jesus was the Son of God.

2. The day after this transaction, was the *Jewish* sabbath, on the eve of which, it was unlawful for them to suffer any such spectacles as crucified malefactors to be exposed; the chief priests therefore came to *Pilate*, who in compliance with their request, ordered the legs of the criminals to be broken, and

and their bodies taken down; and in this there is something remarkable, for the death of the cross was very lingering, and indeed the thieves who were hung up at the same time with our Saviour, were yet as much alive as ever. It was to dispatch them therefore, that the additional punishment of breaking their legs was added; but when the executioners came to our blessed Lord, they broke not his legs, because to their great surprize, they found him dead already; which had not his life or death been absolutely dependent on himself, it was next to an impossibility, he should have been. However, a centurion ran his spear into our LORD's side, after which, his body was begged of the *Roman* go-

vernor, by *Joseph of Arimathea*; a rich man, who embalming it with many precious spices, and wrapping it up in fine linen cloth, laid it in a new sepulchre, which he had in a neighbouring garden, and where never man had been laid.

3. Now the *Jews*, whose envy even death could not conquer, seeing this, came also to the *Roman* governor, and telling him that the deceiver, (so they called our blessed Lord God) had given out that he should rise from the dead on the third day. Now said they, we desire that you will order a guard to watch his grave till that time be past, and not only so, but let us put a seal upon it; least his disciples coming should steal him away in the night, and afterwards give out, that

that he was risen from the dead; *and the second error be worse than the first.* To all this *Pilate* consented; but on the first day of the week, that is the day after the *Jewish* sabbath, when very early in the morning, even before it was yet day, *Mary Magdalene*, with another female disciple of our Lord's, came to the sepulchre, in order to indulge their melancholy: there was a violent earthquake, for just at the same time, an angel of God descended from heaven; and having rolled back the stone from the mouth of the cave, sat upon it: he appeared like a blaze of fire, and the watch were so terrified, that they lost all sense and motion. The angel then spoke to the women, and

told them, he knew whom they sought, *Jesus* who was crucified, but he was not there, but risen from the dead. Now the guards had by this time sufficiently recovered themselves, to leave their post, and running to the city, they told the chief priests all that had happened. Upon which the council gave them a large sum of money, and desiring them to tell the people, that while they slept, his disciples had stolen *Christ* away; this whole matter was hushed, so as to make that false report pass current among the *Jews* for many years after. But the evidence of *Christ's* resurrection, was a matter of too much importance; not to be put beyond all doubt or controversy, among his disciples, who were

were afterwards to bear testimony of it.

5. Christ shewed himself not once, but several times to his friends and disciples, after his resurrection from the dead, and first to *Mary Magdalene*; which *St John* gives us an account of, as follows, that being come to the sepulchre, as I have already related to you, and finding the body of Christ gone from the place where she had seen it laid; after bewailing the loss, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing by her; but she taking him for the gardener, (for she knew him not at first) began immediately to make enquiries for the corps of her deceased Lord; upon which Jesus said unto her, *MARY!* upon that her eyes were immediately opened, but

he would not suffer her to touch him, because, as he said, *he had not yet ascended to the Father.* This *Mary* told his disciples, but they would not give her credit. The same Evening therefore, when a number were gathered together, and all the doors close shut for fear of the *Jews*, Christ came in among them, shewed them the marks in his hands and feet, staid some time with them, and then departed. But there was still one of his principal disciples to be convinced, *Thomas* surnamed *Didymus*, who not being by at the time of our Saviour's appearance, thought it was a thing so contrary to probability, that he would not believe without the evidence of his own senses, and this he had. For

eight days after, when all the disciples were again assembled, and *Thomas* among the rest, *Christ* came in the same manner as formerly, and shewing himself to *Thomas*, who instantly acknowledged and adored him, he rebuked his want of faith, saying, *Blessed were they that had not seen, and yet believed.*

6. Our Saviour shewed himself a third time to his disciples, at the the sea of *Tiberias*; and at this place he thought fit to manifest himself first by a miracle. They had been fishing all night, but caught nothing; and in the morning *Christ* stood upon the shore near them, and enquiring after their success, he desired that they would cast their net on the right side, and they should find some.

And even as he told them, they inclosed such a multitude, that they could hardly draw their net to land. Upon this *Peter* immediately knew it must be their master, and girding his coat about him, he swam to shore. Here *Christ* dined with his disciples, and this was the last time of his honouring them with his presence upon earth: for after having recommended the care of preaching the gospel, to them in a very particular manner; and promised them the gift of the Holy Ghost, he was received by a bright cloud and taken bodily up into heaven before their eyes, where he is to remain, at the right hand of God till at the last day, when he comes in glory to judge

bo

both the quick and the dead.

And according to the promise of our LORD, at the next feast of Pentecost, (the same with our Whitsuntide) while the twelve apostles were gathered together, they received the gift of the Holy Ghost, which was bestowed upon them in a violent tempest, that rose all of a sudden, as if it would shake the house in which they were assembled to the ground ;

and the same time the room was filled with cloven tongues, as they appeared, of fire, which sat upon each. Now the apostles were all mean and illiterate men ; but after this they immediately began to speak in all languages, to the wonder and amazement of every body ; so that the same of this transaction went through all the country, and many thousands became professors of the Christian faith.

CHAPTER X.

St Matthew the Evangelist.

OF the *Evangelists*, or as I have already explained the word, those of our SAVIOUR's *apostles*, who writ his life in the GOSPEL, *St Matthew* is the first :

his surname was *Levi*, and his profession of all others, the most infamous among the *Jews*, he being a *publican*, or one of those *Hebrews* who undertook the

O 2

office

office of *tax gatherer* to the *Roman emperor*. St *Matthew* was sitting at the *receipt of custom*, when our Lord thought proper to call him, and immediately getting up, he left the place and followed him. After Christ's ascension, this apostle, for the first eight years, preached up and down *Judea*; and when he betook himself to the *Hea-*

thens, *Ethiopia* is generally assigned as the province of his *apostolical* ministry, where by his excellent doctrine, and the miracles he performed, he triumphed greatly over ignorance and idolatry: in this country it is most probable he suffered *martyrdom*, but by what kind of death is altogether uncertain,

CHAPTER XI.

St Mark the Evangelist.

SAIN**T** *Mark* was a *Jew*, of the tribe of *Levi*; he was not one of the twelve *apostles*, but converted probably by St *Peter*, to whom he was a constant companion in all his travels, supplying the place of a scribe and interpreter. It

was by this *apostle* that he was sent into *Egypt*, where he fixed his residence in the city of *Alexandria* and places adjacent; the success of his labours was so great, that he converted numbers both of men and women. And going farther west towards

wards *Lybia*, notwithstanding the barbarity of the inhabitants, he planted the *Gospel* among them, and firmly fixed their belief of it. However, after this coming back to *Alexandria*, it was there he suffered *martyrdom*. For the *Egyptian idolaters*, thinking *St Mark's* doctrine a dishonour to their darling *idol*, they broke thro' the assembly where he was celebrating divine service, and binding his feet with

corde, dragged him thro' the streets, and thrust him into prison. Where in the night he was comforted with a divine vision. Next day the enraged people renewed the tragedy, and used him in the same barbarous manner, dragging him through the streets by the feet, 'till all the flesh being raked off, and his blood run out, his spirits failed, and he expired.

CHAPTER XII.

St Luke the Evangelist.

THE place of *St Luke's* nativity was *Antioch*, the *metropolis* of that rich and beautiful country *Syria*. In which city the disciples of *Jesus*, were first honored with the name of *Christians*.

He was a *physician*, and famous also for *painting*. However, he no more than *St Mark* was of the number of *apostles*, being as is generally supposed converted by *St Paul*, to whom he was

an inseparable companion, and fellow-labourer in the ministry of the *Gospel*. However, some say he parted with *St Paul* at *Rome*, and returning back into his own country travelled into *Egypt*, and took upon himself the bishoprick of *Thebais*, a city there. Tho' it is most probable, that he never quitted *St Paul* till the death of that *apostle*. As to the time and manner of this evangelist's death, accounts are very various. Some affirming him to die

in *Egypt*, others in *Greece*; some in *Bithynia*, others at *Ephesus*; some make him die a natural, others a violent death. Among which the latter say, that being preaching in *Greece*, the infidels made head against him, and, for want of acrofs, hung him upon an olive-tree, in the eighty fourth year of his age. His body now lies buried in *Constantinople*, whither it was removed by the command of *Constantine* the emperor, or his son *Constantius*.

CHAPTER XIII.

St John the Evangelist.

THE next of our Saviour's apostles, of whose life and actions we can draw any knowledge from the Holy Scriptures,

is *St John*. Our Saviour's beloved disciple, who of all the rest seems to have been most strongly attached to his sacred person,

son, having attended him constantly during the time of his ministry, nor left him even when the world forsook him at the time of his cruel passion; boldly owning him in the face of all the *Jews*, and taking his blessed mother home to his house, where after the crucifixion of Christ, she lived to the hour of her death. The *Virgin Mary*, indeed, was as it were a legacy bequeathed by our LORD, to St *John*. When on the cross, turning to her, he desired her to behold her son, meaning that apostle; and when we consider the mild and angelick disposition of St *John*, our Saviour's distinction of him is the less to be wondered at.

After his resurrection, Christ upon telling St *Pe-*

ter what should befall him in the course of his preaching the gospel, with his manner of martyrdom, that apostle, enquired what should be the fate of St *John*, to which our LORD answered, *what is that to thee, What if I have a mind that he should tarry 'till I come*: now from a wrong understanding of this expression, several imagined, that St *John* was never to die at all. However, though we have not any warrant from scripture to say what became of him; as the Evangelist is very concise with regard to each of Christ's ministers after his death; yet from his history there is no doubt, that after having lived to see the destruction of *Jerusalem*, he died at the city of *Ephesus*,

near a hundred years old, being the only one of his fellow-labourers, who died a natural death; nor indeed, could he have escaped martyrdom, had it not been by the particular and most astonishing interposition of providence, for he had once at *Rome*,

by the command of that abominable emperor, *Nero*, been thrown into a chaldron full of boiling oil. But came out of it again unhurt, even as *Shedach*, *Mesbach*, and *Abednego*, escaped from *Nebuchadnezzar's* burning fiery furnace.

CHAPTER XIV.

St PETER.

THE Holy Jesus being gone to heaven, the apostles began to act according to the power and commission which they had received from him; among the numbers of those about which the scripture hath been most explicit, I shall treat seperately, and first of *St Peter*. After the descent of the Holy Ghost,

we find him in the boldest and noblest manner, defending the doctrine of his eternal master, against the falseness and infidelity of the *Jews*. Nor did he fail to give them a proof of that power, which lodged in Christ and he transferred to those that believed in him; for going with *St John* shortly after to evening prayer,

prayer, he saw a poor cripple, who tho' above forty years old, had been from his birth lying at the beautiful gate of the temple, asking an alms. *Peter* earnestly looking upon him, told him that he had no money to give him, but of such as he had he should partake; when lifting him up by the hand, he commanded him in *the name of Jesus, to rise up and walk*; the words were no sooner spoken, than the thing was done; but tho' *Peter* took occasion from thence to convince many people of the divinity of that *Jesus*, they had so lately crucified; yet he and *John* incurred the censure of the *Jerusalem* council by it, and were strictly forbid exercising their apostolick function any more.

You have already had, in the course of this history, more than one example of the punishment which constantly waits upon the covetous and lying: but none can be more dreadful, than what befel *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, who were among the multitude of those that professed the christian faith; and it being agreed that they should have every thing in common, all the converts who had estates or houses sold them, and brought the money to the apostles, to be laid out for the general good. The false *Ananias*, however, and his wicked wife, though they affected the good name, which would attend such a charitable action; secreted part of the money which they had received for their goods, and

and aggravated their crime by denying it. But the lye was hardly out of their vile mouths, when they were both struck dead, and fell at *St Peter's* feet; filling all that saw them with horror and amazement: and being a proper reproof to hypocrisy, stinginess, lying, and world-mindedness of all sorts.

St Peter after this, went about performing several miracles, such as raising the dead, curing the sick, healing the lame and blind, and dispossessing devils. But no passage of his ministry is more eminent, than that one, of his being thrown into prison by *Herod Agrippa*, from whence he was delivered by an angel, who descending from heaven in the night, opened the prison doors, and find-

ing *Peter* asleep (for such is the blessing of a good conscience, that even tho' the apostle lay upon the cold stones, he was fast asleep) raised him, knocked off his chains, bad him gird on his garments, and follow him. He did so, and having past through all the gates, which unlocked of themselves, as they approached, 'till, to the great joy and wonder of all his friends, he got safe into *Mary's* house, and from thence withdrew to a place of less danger.

St Peter's succeeding labours were for a long time confined to such matter only, as more immediately related to the regulation of the Christian Church; in which thro' the natural perverseness of humanity, even in these early

early days, there had already risen some heresies and dissensions, 'till coming to *Rome*, he distinguished himself and the superiority of his power and doctrine, in a notable disputation with *Simon Magus* a forcerer, whose impostures had deceived the whole city; but *Peter* not only soon convinced them of their error, but punished the villain by a sudden and publick death. Now as we cannot gather any thing farther of this apostle from the scripture I shall

here close my account of him, only informing you, that in the end, he sealed the first testimony to the truth of the Gospel which he preached, with his blood. For he was crucified at *Rome*, but because he thought it was too great an honour to suffer the same death which his God had before undergone, he, by his own request, was hung on the cross with his head downwards, and so changed this corrupt world, for the pure and eternal kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER XV.

St PAUL.

ST Paul, a Jew by birth, and by name also *Saul*, was one of the most violent enemies to the Christian faith; imprisoning and abusing the disciples of our LORD, wherever he found them; nay, he had been once actually one of those, who was aiding at the death of the first Christian martyr, St *Stephen*. However, this man was set apart by Christ, for a chosen vessel to bear God's name before the heathens, and kings, and the children of *Israel*. Now his conversion was after this manner; while he was on his journey to the city of *Damascus* from *Jerusalem*, where

he went with full power, from the high-priest and Jewish council, to act against the Christians; and on a sudden, there shone round him a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun; whereat being greatly amazed, he and his companions fell to the ground, and a voice was heard saying, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me*. The voice then told *Saul*, that it came from Jesus, whom he persecuted, and desired him to go to *Damascus*, and there he should learn what was necessary to be done by him. *Saul* upon rising from the ground, found himself blind, and so he remained for

for three days, 'till being healed by *Ananias*, a disciple of our LORD's, then at *Damascus*; who had been warned by a vision, for that purpose: *Paul* fully convinced of the divinity of Jesus Christ, began to preach that gospel, which he had before so often reviled and persecuted, and with such success, that no opposers could stand against the force of his arguments. St *Paul* being at *Paphos*, and fully endued with the gift of the Holy Ghost, there met with *Elymas* the forcerer; whom he struck with blindness in the presence of *Sergius Paulus* the governor. After which, *Paul* preached Christ at *Antioch*, but was forced to leave that place, by the wicked contrivance of his *Jewish* countrymen.

Paul, after this, in the name of the Lord, caused a spirit of divination to depart from a damsel possessed with it, whose masters being used to make gain by her means, were so enraged at it, that they procured *Paul* and *Silas* to be beaten with many stripes, and thrown into prison. At midnight, the jaylor having been alarmed with a great noise, and an earthquake, which had burst open the prison-doors, imagined all his prisoners had escaped, and was going to make himself away: but *Paul*, calling out to him, assured him, they were all there, and so prevented his design. Whereupon the jaylor was converted to the faith of Christ, and he and all his family were baptized, and *Paul* received

ceived great kindness from him, and was soon delivered from his confinement with honour.

After performing many miracles, and proselyting great numbers to the Christian religion, he was at last apprehended at *Jerusalem* by the *Jews*, and would have been put to death, had it not been for the chief captain of the *Romans* in that city, who, finding the *Jews* implacably bent to destroy him, sent him under a guard to *Cæsarea*, the residence of *Felix*, and chief *Roman* governor of *Judea*; who finding the *Jews* unable to prove any thing worthy of death against him, used him with lenity; and after certain days sent for him, his wife *Drusilla*, a

Jewess, being present, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ; and as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, *Felix* trembled, and answered, *Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will send for thee.* But after two years, *Portius Festus* succeeded *Felix*; and *Felix*, willing to shew the *Jews* a pleasure, left *Paul* bound.

This great apostle had at last no other way left to escape the malice of the *Jews*, but by appealing to *Cæsar* himself: and being put in a ship, in order to be sent to *Rome*, they were overtaken by a violent storm, in which, having run the greatest hazard, they were cast in safety on the

the island of *Melita*, now called *Malta*. The people of the island shewed them great kindness in their distress, and made them a fire to warm them; but when *St Paul* had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, a viper came out of the heat, and fastened on his hand, which made the company conclude him to be an ill man; and that, tho' he escaped the shipwreck, vengeance suffer'd him not to live: but when they saw him shake off the viper into the fire, without receiving any harm, they changed their minds, and said, he was a god. And he continued there three months, curing the sick, and healing all manner of diseases.

Indeed *St Paul*, of all

the apostles, appears to have been most indefatigable in the great work he had undertaken, travelling from East to West all the world over, suffering severe scourgings, and imprisonment: nay, he was brought often to the very brink of death, both by sea and land. Yet he was not discouraged, but rather grew bolder and stronger in the faith of Christ, *persevering in the good fight, 'till he had finished his course.*

He, like the other apostles, performed many miracles in confirmation of his divine mission, and at last suffered martyrdom, under *Nero* at *Rome*; in that general persecution raised against the Christians, under a pretence that

that they fired the city. Some of the antient writers affirm, that he incurred the displeasure of that barbarous monster, by joining with *St Peter* in the destruction of *Simon Magus*; others, that by converting a favourite concubine of *Nero's* he drew upon himself his devilish fury; be

that as it will, he was be-headed in the sixty-eighth year of his age, leaving many valuable writings behind him, to the church; and bearing the title to all posterity, of the particular apostle of the Gentiles; or those converts to the Christian faith, out of the *Jewish* covenant.

F I N I S.



